

The Koch Kings of Kámarúpa.—By E. A. GAIT, Esq., I. C. S.

INTRODUCTION.

Perhaps the most interesting epoch in Assam history is that in which the Koch dynasty rose to power, and after defeating the petty chiefs amongst whom the country had been split up after the fall of the Pála rulers, succeeded in consolidating their rule throughout the ancient Kámarúpa, and in reviving for a time the pristine glories of that once famous kingdom.

Several accounts of the Koch dynasty are already available,* but by far the most detailed narrative of the early founders of this kingdom with which I am acquainted, is that contained in a manuscript history [*Vamśávali* or *Purushanáma* (Sanskrit)] in the possession of Raja Lakshmi Náráyaṇa Kuar, the leading representative of the Darang branch of the Koch family.

This history is supposed to have been written, about 1806 A. D., by Súrya Hari Gaṇaka, under the orders of Raja Samudra Náráyaṇa.† It is inscribed on oblong strips of *Sachi* bark, and each page is illustrated. The story ends suddenly with the death of Paríkshít, and as there is nothing to show that the work was considered finished, it is conjectured that the author died before he had completed it.

As no account of this *Vamśávali* has hitherto appeared in print, I propose to furnish an abstract of it now, and to take the opportunity to give a sketch of what is known of the country before the Koch kings rose to power, and to examine one or two questions connected with this dynasty regarding which existing accounts differ, in the light of the information afforded by this history and also of inscriptions on temples and other sources.‡

* Cf. *Aśmburanjis* by Biśveśwar and Rái Guṇábhírám Baṛua, Robinson's Descriptive Account of Assam, Dr. Hunter's Statistical accounts of Koch Bihár and Raṅgpur, and the accounts by Buchanan Hamilton, Babu Rám Chandra Ghosh and other authorities cited in Dr. Hunter's works.

† Súrya Hari Gaṇaka is reputed to have been the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time in Assam. He was the author of numerous Sanskrit and Assamese works, and his descendant, Manbhál Maṇḍal, holds a deed of gift dated 1720 Śak (1804 A. D.) by which the Ahom King made a grant of land to Súrya Hari in recognition of his learning and piety.

‡ Including the *Vamśávali* of Rájá Prasiddha Náráyaṇa Kuar, a manuscript copy of the *Yoginí Tantra* in the possession of a Bráhmaṇ of Hanlí Mohanpur, in which the prophecies of the gods have from time to time been brought up to date, and lastly a few inscription in temples, and the references made to the Koch

The early history of Kámarúpa is wrapped in mystery, and our knowledge of it is drawn from dubious and fragmentary references in the *Mahábhárata*, and in the *Puráṇas* and *Tantras*, chief amongst which may be mentioned the *Yoginí Tantra* and the *Bhágavata* and *Káliká Puráṇas*.

The boundaries of the country varied greatly from time to time.

Extent of Kamarupa. In the *Yoginí Tantra* it is said that Kámarúpa comprised the country between the Karatoyá and the Dikrai, so that it included not only the whole of what is now known as the Brahmaputra Valley, but also Rangpur and the State of Koch Bihár. It was subdivided into four portions, *viz*: Kámapíṭha from the Karatoyá to the Sankosh, Ratnapíṭha from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, Suvarnapíṭha from the Rupahi to the Bharali, and Saumarpiṭha from the Bharali to the Dikkara-básini or Dikrai. It is described as bounded on the North by Kuñjagiri, on the West by the Karatoyá, on the East by the Girikañjaka, and on the South by the junction of the Brahmaputra and Lakshma rivers. It is added that Kámarúpa is three cornered and is 100 yojanas in breadth and 300 yojanas in length.* According to the *Káliká Puráṇa*, Kámakhya and Prágyjotishapura were situated in the centre of Kámarúpa, and the *Vishṇu Puráṇa* adds that the country extended around it for 100 yojanas in all directions.† In the *Mahábhárata*, Bhagadatta's Empire of Prágyjotisha or Kámarúpa is spoken of as extending to the seacoast,‡ and the copper plate of Vanamála, which will be referred to further on, says that the rule of that monarch also extended to the sea.§

Hinen Tsiang places the circumference of the country when he visited it, at 10,000 li, from which General Cunningham infers that it must, at that time, have comprised the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley as well as Koch Bihár and Bhotán.||

The name of the country is mythologically explained as follows:—

When Satí died of grief at the reproaches of her husband Síva, the

Origin of name "Kamarupa." latter, overcome by remorse, wandered about the world carrying her dead body on his head.

In order to put a stop to his penance Vishṇu followed him and lopped

Kings by Mušalmán historians, which have been made accessible by Blochmann in the J. A. S. B. for 1872.

* Edition published in Calcutta at the Bangobashi press in 1294 Sal, pp. 76, 77.

† *Káliká Puráṇa*, page 91, of Edition published at the Bangobashi press; and *Vishṇu Puráṇa*, page 81 of Edition published at the same press.

‡ *Sabhá Parva*, XXVI, XXVII. The references found elsewhere to the different parts of the *Mahábhárata* are to the translation of Pratáp Chandra Roy.

§ J. A. S. B. IX, (Part II) 773.

|| *Ancient geography of India*, Volume I, Buddhist period, p 500.

away the body piece-meal with his discus. The body fell to earth in 51 different pieces, and wherever each piece fell, the ground was held to be sacred. Her organs of generation fell on Niláchala hill near Gauháti, and the deity of that place was thenceforth known as Kámákhyá, the goddess of sexual desire. As Siva still continued to do penance, the other gods became afraid that he would thereby acquire universal power, and accordingly despatched Kámadeva, the Indian Cupid, to make him fall in love again, and thereby break his penance. Kámadeva succeeded in his Mission, but so enraged was Siva at the result, that he burnt him to ashes by a fiery glance from the eye in the centre of his forehead. Kámadeva eventually recovered his original form, and the place in which this took place was ever afterwards known as Kámarúpa.

The earliest recorded king of Kámarúpa, of whom however, very little is known, was named Mahíraṅga Dána-
Mahiranga Danava. va.* He was succeeded by his son Háṭaka Asura, after whom came Sámbara Asura and then Ratna Asura.†

After this, there was a chief named Ghaṭaka, the ruler of the
Ghataka Kirata. Kirátas, who are said to have been a powerful race, much addicted to eating flesh and drinking strong drinks.

Ghaṭaka was defeated and slain by Naraka, who was born
Naraka Asura. of the earth by Vishṇu, and had been deputed by him to exterminate the Kirátas. Having succeeded in doing this,‡ he made Prágjyotishapura (the modern Gauháti) his capital,§ and settled numerous Bráhmans at Kámákhyá. His rule extended from the Karatoyá on the West, to the Dikráṅg on the East. It is said that he married Máyá, the

* Notices of Mahíraṅga and his successors will be found in the Káliká Puráṇa Chaps. 36-42, and on page 81 of the *Yoginí Tantra*. In the *Raghuvaṁśa*, it is related that Raghu crossed the Brahmaputra with a view to attacking the king of Prágjyotisha or Kámarúpa. The latter is said to have submitted without venturing to give battle, and to have paid a tribute of war elephants. The name of the king is not mentioned.

† The names Dánava and Asura, indicate that these kings were of aboriginal origin. According to the *Vaṃśávali* of Prasiddha Náráyan Kuar, Sambar, who is mentioned in the text as the grandson of Mahíraṅga, was the founder of the dynasty. He is there spoken of as the son of Brahmá, and is said to have had his capital at Raṅgamáti.

‡ Apparently he only subdued them. In the *Udyoga Parvan*, his son Bhagadatta is referred to as bringing Kirátas to the aid of Duryodhana. (XVIII, 15-16.)

§ There is a hill near Gauháti which is still known as the hill of Naraka Asur.

daughter of the king of Vidarbha or Kuṇḍina. Naraka was greatly favoured by Vishṇu who placed him in charge of Kámákhyá, and told him that so long as that goddess was pleased with him he would do well, but that if he angered her, he would suffer, and that he himself would then desert him. It is said that Naraka carried off 10,000 girls as wives, and that he became so proud that he asked Kámákhyá to marry him. To this the goddess assented on condition that he erected a temple to her on Niláhalá and also constructed a tank and a road to the temple in a single night. Naraka accepted the terms and had almost accomplished his task, when the goddess caused a cock to crow before dawn, and saying that that was a proof that day had come, evaded her promise and refused to marry him. Overcome with rage, Naraka slew the cock, and the place where he did this is still known as Kukuṭa-Káṭá (the place where the cock was killed). But Naraka's crowning misfortune was his refusal to permit Vaśiṣṭha Muni to go to worship at Kámákhyá, in consequence of which the Muni cursed Naraka and Kámákhyá, saying that thence forward no one who worshipped at Kámákhyá's shrine should see the fulfilment of his desire. By the aid of Śiva, the duration of this curse was limited to three hundred years, but Naraka had now completely alienated both Kámákhyá and Vishṇu and was eventually slain by the latter in the incarnation of Kṛiṣṇa. Kṛiṣṇa's invasion of Prágjyotiṣapura is described in the *Bhágavata* and *Vishṇu Puráṇas*, in the latter of which it is stated that his attack on Naraka was instigated by Indra.* The capital was defended by sharp *páñjís* and by numerous outworks erected by the Asura Muru, but Kṛiṣṇa cut his way through with his discus and slew Muru and his sons. He then entered the city and engaged in a terrible combat with Naraka, and after killing thousands of daityas, he clove Naraka in twain with his discus. He recovered the golden earrings of Aditi and other property seized by him, and sent the 10,000 girls imprisoned in his harem together with his 6,000 elephants and his horses to Dváraka.

Naraka left two sons, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta, of whom the former was appointed by Kṛiṣṇa to succeed him as king of Prágjyotiṣa. Bhagadatta is frequently referred to in the *Mahábhárata*. In the *Sabhá Parvan*, it is related that he was defeated by Arjuna after a battle which lasted for eight days.† Later on, when the forces of the Kauravas and Páṇḍavas were being mustered for the last struggle,

* *Bhágavata Puráṇa* (Edition published at the *Bangobashi* press) X, 59, and *Vishṇu Puráṇa*, pp. 81—83 (V, 29)

† *Sabhá Parvan*, secs. XXVI and XXVII. His troops are described as a host of Kirátas and Chínas, and numerous other warriors that dwelt on the seacoast.

Bhagadatta went to the assistance of Duryodhana with an *Akshauhini* of troops consisting of Chínas and Kirátas.* At the final battle of Kurukshetra, he performed prodigies of valour, and no less than four sections of the *Droṇa Parvan* are devoted to a narrative of his heroic deeds, from the time when he rescued Duryodhana from the onslaughts of Bhíma to his fight with Arjuna, in which he was at last defeated and slain. The issue of this last combat is ascribed to the magic intervention of Kṛishṇa, who rendered harmless the invincible weapon which he had previously given to Bhagadatta's father Naraka.†

Bhagadatta was succeeded by others of his line, one of whom, Pralambha, is described as having been an unusually powerful prince. By his wife Jivadá, he had a son named Hajara, and the latter, by his wife Tárá, who was an incarnation of Lakshmí, had in his turn a son named Vanamála. A copper plate containing a grant of land by the latter to a Bráhmaṇ which was found near Tezpur in 1840 A. D., is the authority for the account of Bhagadatta's successors here given.‡

It has been assumed that Vanamála was of the Pála dynasty, but his asserted descent from Naraka makes this impossible; this assumed ancestry, and the fact that he bore the Kshattriya title Varman or Barman, renders it much more likely that he was a converted aboriginal potentate of the same class as the Khyen and Koch kings.

The so-called Rájás of Rání, in Kámrúp, claim to be descended from the lineage of Bhagadatta.

Kṛishṇa frequently appears in Assam Mythology. We have already seen how he slew Naraka and set up his son Bhagadatta in his stead. He is also said to have carried off his bride Rukmiṇi from her father Bhíshmaka, the king of Kuṇḍilya§ or the country around Sadiyá, between the Dikráng and Dibong rivers. The name of this monarch is still preserved in upper Assam, and a ruined fort, some sixteen miles north of Sadiyá, is attributed to his reign.|| The name of the kingdom survives in the Kuṇḍil river.

* Udyoga Parvan, sec. XVIII.

† Droṇa Parvan, secs. XXVI—XXX.

‡ J. A. S. B. IX, p. 766. The plate bears a dato in an unknown era—"Samvat 19". Presumably this refers to the date of the king's succession.

§ According to ordinary Pauráṇik accounts, Bhíshmaka was king of Kuṇḍina or Vidarbha, the modern Berar, in Central India.—Ed.

|| These ruins were described by Colonel Hannay in the J. A. S. B. for 1848, p. 459. It is not unlikely that further research amongst this and other ruins in the same direction, would add considerably to our knowledge of ancient Assam history.

Kṛishṇa's grandson, Aniruddha, carried off Ushá, the daughter of Báṇa Rájá, king of S'õnitapura, the city of Báṇa, now known by the Assamese equivalent,

And of Usha.

Tezpur—in consequence of which he was caught by that monarch and imprisoned. The subsequent invasion of Báṇa Rájá's kingdom by Kṛishṇa and the rescue of Aniruddha is described in the *Bhágavatá Purána* and elsewhere. From the *Káliká Purána* it appears that Rájá Báṇa was the contemporary and friend of Naraka.*

From these stories, all that we can gather with certainty is that the Brahmaputra Valley was known to the Aryan invaders of India at a very early period, and that the process of converting the aboriginal tribes to Hinduism, which is going on before our eyes to-day, commenced long before the time of which we have any authentic record.

Kámarúpa appears to have been a famous place for pilgrimages and devotions, and the fame of Kámákhyá and the Brahmakuṇḍa had spread abroad at a very early date. In the *Tantras* it is said: "Elsewhere deities are scarce, but in Kámarúpa, they are found in every house."

At the beginning of the Śakáditya era, a king named Deveśvara ruled somewhere in Kámarúpa, but the site of his capital is unknown. He was a Súdra by caste, and is said to have tried to prevent the spread of Buddhism and to propagate the worship of Kámákhyá, but without any very great success.

Devesvara.

In the *Yoginí Tantra*, mention is made of Nágaśaṅkara or Nágaśaṅkhyá, who is said to have been born of the Karatoyá river, about 378 A. D., and to have founded a dynasty which ruled for four hundred years. His capital was above the Nágaśaṅkara temple at Pratápgarh, in Vishṇunátha (Bishnáth).

Nagasankara.

Our earliest authentic knowledge of the country is derived from the writings of Hiuen Tsiang, the celebrated Chinese traveller and pilgrim. He visited Kámarúpa about 640 A. D., at which time a Hindú prince named

Hiuen Tsiang's account of Kamarupa.

the writings of Hiuen Tsiang, the celebrated Chinese traveller and pilgrim. He visited

* Vishṇu Purána, Book V, Chaps. 32, 33, and Káliká Purána, p. 94. The events described here form the subject of one of the earliest known epics in the Assamese language. It is known as *Kumára-harāṇa*, and is said to have been written by Śrī Chandra Bháratí.

It should be noted that Tezpur is not the only place which claims to be the site of Rájá Báṇa's capital. The remains of what is said to be the city of this king, are still pointed out at a place a few miles south of Dinájpur, which to this day is known as *Bán Rájár garh*. (Anandarám Borna's Sanskrit Dictionary, p. 113.)

Kumára Bháskara Varman* was on the throne. He describes this ruler as a Bráhmaṇ, but by this it seems doubtful whether he meant anything more than that he was a Hindú and not a Buddhist. Barman is a well known Kshattriya title, and is one which is commonly adopted to-day by Kacháris, when they accept Hinduism and assume the sacred thread, on the fiction that they are concealed Kshattriyas. The method of conversion by fictions such as this is, doubtless, of very ancient date, and from the fact that this prince described himself as "Barman," it seems not unreasonable to presume that he was a Hindú convert from some aboriginal tribe. The presumption is strengthened by the fact that his subjects are described as being of small stature with dark yellow complexions, and by our knowledge that subsequent rulers, *e.g.*, the Khyen and Koch kings, were nothing more than Hinduised aborigines.

Hien Tsiang reports that the people adored and offered sacrifices to the Devas, and adds that although Buddhism was not forbidden, its votaries were scarce.

The soil is described as being deep and fertile, and the towns were surrounded by moats filled with water brought from rivers or banked up lakes.† The people were fierce in appearance, but upright and studious; their language differed somewhat from that spoken in Mid-India. In his time, as now, the country was famous for wild elephants, which were especially numerous in the south-east.‡

After Hien Tsiang's account, we are again left with no authentic information regarding the country. It is said that Subáhu was born in the 19th generation beginning from Naraka, in the lineage of Bhagadatta. Subáhu became an ascetic and went to the Himálayas, and was succeeded by his son Suparú who was killed by his ministers.

Then a Kshattriya Sannyási named Jitári, came from the west and founded a kingdom. He deserted Gauháti and built a capital further west. His contemporary Jalpeśvara had his capital where the Sákta temple of Jalpeśvara (which he founded) now stands, in the Jalpaiguri District. Jitári was succeeded in turn by Subalí, Padma Náráyaṇa, Chandra Náráyaṇa,

* *Si-yu-ki*. Béal's trans. II. p. 196.

† The Áhom capitals were in the same way encircled by moats, and the old Kacháris capital at Dimápur was similarly protected on two sides, while the Dhan-siri flowed along the third side.

‡ These animals appear always to have been plentiful, for we read in the Raghuvansá that the king of Kámarúpa or Prágjyotisha gave many elephants as tribute to Raghu (IV—83), and in the Vishṇu Puráṇa (p. 81) it is stated that Krishṇa took 6,000 elephants from Naraka's capital, after he had defeated and slain that monarch.

Mahendra Náráyaṇa, Gajendra Náráyaṇa, Práṇa Náráyaṇa, Jaya Náráyaṇa, Kshobha Náráyaṇa, and Ráma Chandra.*

The next king to be mentioned is Arimatta, who ruled the country on the south bank of the Brahmaputra from the neighbourhood of Gauháṭí, as far as Bahá in Nowgong. He is said to have been born of a princess of the house of Ráma Chandra,† who was raped by the Brahmaputra river. According to the *Vaṁśávali* of Prasiddha Náráyaṇa, Arimatta ruled at Baidargaṛh until 1160 Śak. (A. D. 1238.)‡

His son Jaṅgál Báláhu was a mighty warrior, and was engaged in constant feuds with the Kaehárí and Jaintiá Rájás. The ruins of a fort said to have been built by him are still visible in Sahari Mauza, near Nowgong. He eventually made peace with the Kaehárí Rájá, and married his daughter, but hostilities again broke out and he was defeated. He fled covered with wounds, and was drowned in the Kallang river.

Four kings, named Mimaṅg, Gajaṅg, Sribaṅg and Mrigaṅg are mentioned by Guṇábhírám as having reigned for 200 years at Lohityapur in Kámarúpa, and as having been succeeded by Pheṅguá Rájá. In Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vaṁśávali*, on the other hand, it is said that Naraṅg and Mrigaṅg were son and grandson of Arimatta, and that the latter being very pious made over his kingdom to Jaya Síṁha, a learned Bráhmaṇ of Darraṅg. But these accounts are so vague and uncertain that it seems to be useless to try to reconcile them or to construct a connected history from them.

The Pála rulers still remain to be mentioned. There is no doubt that kings of this name at one time possessed great power in the country, but our information regarding them is very meagre. Rai Guṇábhírám Baruá in his

* So Guṇábhírám and an old chronicle in the possession of a Bráhmaṇ, to which reference was made by General Jenkins in the J. A. S. B., IX., p. 766. Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vaṁśávali* says that Ráma Chandra was 14th in descent from Jitári. Hannay (J. A. S. B. 1848, p. 464) identified Jitári with Dharma Pála, and says that his kingdom was in Central Assam and that the dynasty became extinct with Rája S'úkráṅka in 1478 A. D. He quotes no authority for these statements.

† So the *Vaṁśávali* of Prasiddha Náráyaṇa. Guṇábhírám says that the princess was of the Nágákhya line.

‡ The so-called Dimuriá Rájá in Kámrúp claims to be descended from Arimatta, and will not touch the Ari fish in consequence. Baidargaṛh is near Betná in Kámrúp. Guṇábhírám says that local tradition ascribes its creation to Pheṅguá Rájá. Traditions regarding Arimatta and his son are still current amongst the people, and their history is said to be narrated in an old *puṭhí* (now very rare) which I have not yet succeeded in obtaining.

Buranji gives a list of 17 Pála princes who reigned in Kámarúpa, *viz* : Jayanta Pála, Chakra Pála, Bhúmi Pála, Prema Pála, Paksha Pála, Daksha Pála, Chandra Pála, Náráyana Pála, Madhu Pála, Indra Pála, Síma Pála, Kṛishṇa Pála, Su Pála, Gandha Pála, Mádhava Pála, Syáma Pála, and Lakshmi Pála. He adds that these princes were Buddhists, and that Lakshmi Pála was followed by a king of the name of Subáhu who died childless and was succeeded by his Mantri Sumati.*

There is a tradition amongst a colony of Bráhmaṇs (called Basat-tariá, *i. e.* 72) resident at Suálkuchi in Kámarúpa, that they settled there in the reign of one Dharma Pála, and a copperplate in their possession records a grant of land made to them by that prince.

Another plate found recently at Benares and deciphered by Professor Venis, records the grant of two villages Badá and Mundará in the *Vishaya* of Badá in the *Bhukti* of Prágjyotisha in the *Maṇḍala* of Kámarúpa to a Bráhmaṇ named Sridhara. The date of the grant has not been deciphered, but Professor Venis is of opinion that it was about 1142 A. D. The name of the prince making the grant is Kumára Pála, son of Ráma Pála and grandson of Vighraha Pála. The inscription says that Ráma Pála killed a certain Rájá Bhíma. Kumára Pála is styled Lord of Gauḍa, and his General is said to have slain a rebellious vassal named Timgya, or Tishya Deva in the East.† From the mention of Ráma Pála and Vighraha Pála and the title Gauḍeśvara assumed by Kumára Pála, this plate would seem to prove that the Rájá in question belonged to the Pála dynasty of Bengal, and the probability that this was so is strengthened by the fact that Deva Pála of that dynasty (who according to General Cunningham ruled from 850 to 885 A. D.) is said to have conquered Kámarúpa.‡

* In an ancient-looking chronicle shown by a Bráhmaṇ to General Jenkins, Lakhi Pála, Subáhu and Sumati are mentioned first, then Jitári and his descendants, then the Pálas, and lastly Mimaṅg and his successors. It is almost impossible to give reasons for arranging these dynasties in one order rather than in another, particularly as it seems probable that they ruled in different parts of the country. It is supposed for instance that Mimaṅg, and his family reigned at Lohityapura in Kámarúpa, and that the capital of Jitári was outside modern Assam in the Jalpaiguri District.

The list of Pálas in this document differs slightly from that quoted in the text, and is given by General Jenkins as follows :—

Japandu Pála, Hari Pála, Dhamba Pála, Ráma Pála, Pakshya Pála, Chandra Pála, Náráyana Pála, Mantri Pála, Haina Pála, Syáma Pála, Mactya Pála, Su Pála, Gandha Pála, Mádhava Pála, and Lakhiá Pála. The differences are however in many cases clearly due to misreadings of the original.

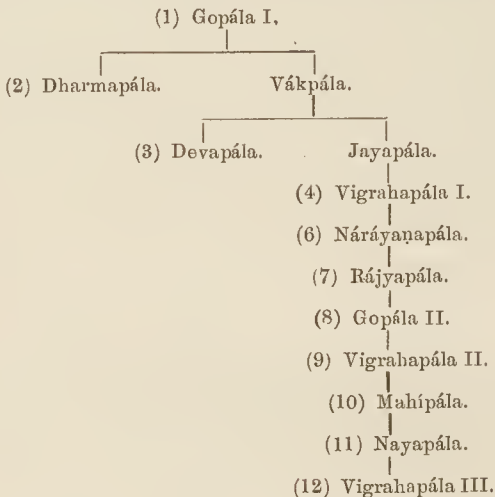
† Supplement to *Pandit* for February, 1893.

‡ *Vide* copperplate found at Bhágalpur and translated by Rajendralála Mitra, J. A. S. B. 1878 page 407. The conquest of Kámarúpa is however uncer-

Mr. Westmaeott in his "Traees of Buddhism in Dinájpur," was of opinion that the Bengal Pála dynasty at one time ruled the country north of the Padma, and Mr. Ferguson in his paper on Hiuen Tsiang says that "Pála kings were ruling east of the Karatoyá long after Bengal had been subdued by the Senas, before whom indeed the Pálas "probably retreated by degrees to the north-east." The only conquest in Kámarúpa claimed by the Sena line, who succeeded the Pála dynasty in Bengal, is that of Vijaya Sena (1046-1066 A. D.) who is said in the inscription found at Rajshahye by Mr. Metcalfe, to have conquered the Kings of Gauḍa, Kámarúpa, and Kaliṅga.*

On the other hand it should be mentioned that the name Pála alone creates very little, if any, presumption regarding the lineage of the rulers bearing it. Many of the Bhuiyás were named Pála, and Dalton speaks of an Aryan dynasty of that name which ruled over Kuṇḍilya or the country around Sadiyá, and succumbed to a Chutiya or Kachári invasion, probably about the same time that the Koches rose to power lower down the Valley.

tain. According to Doctor Hultzsch the meaning of the verse is that Deva Pála supported the king of Kámarúpa against the king of Utkala (*Ind. Ant.* Vol XV, p. 308). Cf. Dr. Kielhorn's paper on the Dinájpur Inscription; *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. LXI, Part I, pp. 77 and ff. The line of Pála Kings is now established to be as follows:—



It is doubtful whether Deva Pála was nephew or son of Dharma Pála.

The dates of Deva Pála, as given above, are those given by General Cunningham, (*Rep. Arch. Sur. Ind.*, XI, 181). Dr Rajendralála Mitra gives 895-915 A. D.

* *J. A. S. B.* 1878 page 401. It is however not very clear from his inscription whether the conqueror was the Sena prince or the ruler of Gauḍa.

In Glazier's Report on Rañgpur, Dharma Pála is mentioned as the founder of a dynasty. It is said that he was succeeded by his son Bhava Chandra, whose successor, Pála, was the last of the line. The remains of a fortified city which even now retains the name of Dharma Pála, are still to be seen in Rañgpur, and in the Baghdwár pargana of the same district are the ruins of Udayapura, the city of Udaya or Bhava Chandra.

Leaving the Pála dynasty we come upon somewhat more certain ground. Tradition says that there was a certain Bráhmaṇ who had a most restless and troublesome cowherd. Going one day to chastise him, he found him asleep and a cobra shading him with its hood. He then noticed from the marks on his feet that he was destined to be a king. He informed him of the fact, released him from menial work and made him promise to make him his *mantrí* when he rose to power. In course of time, acting under the advice of the Brahman, the quondam cowherd deposed the last representative of the Pála race and ascended the throne, making the Bráhmaṇ his councillor. He assumed the name of Níladhva¹jaja, and bringing many Bráhmaṇs from Mithilá did much towards re-establishing Vedic observances. He is said to have belonged to the Khyen tribe, but on conversion to Hinduism, he declared his caste to be that of High Súdra, just as the next dynasty—the Koch—called themselves Rájavamśís. He removed the capital to Kamaṭhapura,* on the western bank of the Dharlá in Koch Bihár. The ruins still exist, and are described by Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton who visited them in 1809.† He says that the city was very extensive, being no less than 19 miles in circumference, of which five were protected by the Dharlá and the rest by a rampart and a ditch. The city was built on the usual plan, enclosure within enclosure, wall within wall, the king's palace occupying the centre of the whole.

His son Chakradhvaja succeeded him, and the latter was in turn followed by his son Nílámbara, who attained to great power. His dominions included the

* He was on this account known as Kamaṭheśvara. It is doubtful how far Níladhva¹jaja's empire extended, and it is not unlikely that in some portions of Eastern Kámarúpa other rulers were at the same time exercising sovereign rights. The Musalmán historians of the time sometimes refer to Kámarúpa and Kamaṭha as if the kingdoms were distinct, and sometimes speak as if the terms were synonymous and referred to one and the same country. "Comotay" is shown in the Map in Blaeu's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Vol II (Amsterdam 1650); but the map is too sketchy to enable the boundaries of the country to be ascertained from it.

† Buchanan-Hamilton's account is reproduced almost verbatim in Hunter's *Statistical Account of Koch Bihár*, p. 362. See also *Statistical Account of Rañgpur*, p. 314.

greater part of Kámarúpa, Goálpárá and Raṅgpur, and also part of Bengal. His attempts to extend his dominions were facilitated by the struggles which the Afghán Kings of Bengal were then making to maintain their independence of the Delhi Emperors.

Nílámbara did much to improve communications, and amongst other works, constructed a magnificent road from Kamaṭhapura to Gho-rágháta, a portion of which still forms part of the main road between Koch Bihár, Raṅgpur and Bogra. The fall of this monarch was in this wise. The son of his councillor, a Bráhmaṇ named Sauehí Pátra, was enamoured of the queen, and the king, hearing of it, ordered him to be killed and some of his flesh to be cooked. He then invited the father to a banquet, and, after making him partake of his son's flesh, told him what he had eaten and explained the circumstances under which the punishment had been inflicted. The councillor at once left the kingdom, under the pretence of making a pilgrimage to the Ganges in order to wash away the sin committed by his son. But his real object was revenge, and to obtain it, he went to Husain Sháh, the Nawáb at Gauḍa, and telling him of the weakness of the kingdom, persuaded him to send a large army to invade it. The siege of Kamaṭhapura is said to have lasted for twelve years,* at the end of which period Husain Sháh gave out that he was going to abandon the siege and return to his own country, but that before doing so, his wife wished to pay a visit to Nílámbara's Rání. Under this pretence some armed men were introduced into the city in litters, and with their aid the city was captured. Nílámbara was taken prisoner and put in an iron cage to be taken to Gauḍa, but he made his escape, and Buchanan Hamilton says that in his time the common people of Kámarúpa still looked for his restoration at some future date. The Assam chronicles fix 1498 A. D. as the date of the capture of Kamaṭhapura, and this date is confirmed by a contemporaneous inscription found by Mr. Westmacott, at Maldah bearing date 907 A. H. (A. D. 1501-2), which belonged to a Madrasah built by Husain Sháh in commemoration of his conquest of Kamaṭha and Kámarúpa.† The author of the Riáz refers to the conquest of these and other places, and mentions Rúpa Náráyaṇa Pála, Kumwar Gosa, Lakkhan and Lachhmi Náráyaṇa amongst the princes subdued. Husain Sháh left his son Dányál with a strong army to complete the conquest, "but when the rains set in and the roads were closed" the Rájá issued with his men from the hills and in a short time they were all killed." A very similar account is given in the *Fatḥiyah*

* This is doubtless an exaggeration.

† J. A. S. B. 1874, p. 281. A. D. 1498 is also accepted by Blochmann as the correct date (J. A. S. B. 1872, p. 79).

i 'Ibriyah, from which it appears that the Rájá who drove out the Musalmáns was the Ahom king.*

A few years later (1506 A. D.) a Paṭhán named Turbuk is said to have advanced as far as Koliabar, where he defeated the Ahoms and was not finally expelled from the Province until 1532 A. D., when he was defeated and slain, and his army chased as far as the Karatoyá river. This invasion is recorded in the Ahom histories, but is not mentioned by Musalmán writers. The Mariás are said to be the descendants of prisoners taken in this war.†

Although Ḥusain Sháh's invasion constituted the first serious attempt of the Muhammadan rulers of Bengal to permanently occupy Kámarúpa, accounts are not wanting of earlier invasions which, however, seem to have partaken more of the nature of filibustering expeditions than of real attempts at conquest.‡

Ghhiyásu'd-dín Bahádúr Sháh is reported to have invaded Assam about 1220 A. D. and to have ascended the Brahmaputra as far as Sadiyá, but in the end he was defeated and driven back to Gauḍa §

Ikhtiyáru'd-dín Yuzbak Tughluril Khán invaded the country in 1256-57 A. D. For a time he was successful and he celebrated his conquest by erecting a mosque, but, when the rains set in, and the country was flooded, large numbers of his men died. The king of Kámarúpa then returned from his hiding place in the hills and gave battle. Tughluril was killed and his army defeated, and only a few escaped to Bengal to tell the tale.|| Muḥammad Sháh, son of Tughluq Sháh,

* Blochmann, J. A. S. B. 1872 pp. 79 and 336. The general account of the Khyon dynasty given above is taken from Guṇábhírám's *Asám buranji*.

† In the Fatḥiyah i 'Ibriyah it is said that they are the descendants of prince Dányál's army. As Turbuk's name is not mentioned in Musalmán histories, it is possible that the name is an Ahom designation of Dányál or some other commander of the forces left by Ḥusain Sháh in Assam.

‡ I do not mention Bakhtiyár Khiljí's invasion, because it has been shown that he did not, as was once supposed, enter Assam and cross the Brahmaputra at Gauháṭi, but that he marched northwards along the Karatoyá river which formed the boundary of the kingdom of Kámarúpa.

§ Guṇábhírám's *Asám buranji* p. 81.

|| Guṇábhírám's *Asám buranji* p. 82 and Tabaqát i Násirí 263. The practice of flooding the country here referred to was common in early warfare in this part of India. Ḥusain Sháh's second invasion of Tippera was frustrated by a similar operation (Long's Analysis of the Rájámála, J. A. S. B. 1850 p. 543). Cunningham (Arch: Surv: of India Vol XV p. 170) mentions a tradition that Muḥlisu'd-dín was killed near Sonárgáoñ, but it is not quite certain that the same person is referred to, and in any case the version given in the text seems to be more authentic.

invaded the country in 1337 A. D. He sent "100,000 horsemen well equipped to Assam; but the whole army perished in that land of witchcraft, and no trace of it was left. He sent a second army to avenge the former disaster, but when they came to Bengal, they "would go no further, and the plan had to be given up."*

In the reign of Barbak, some time about 1460 A. D., Ismá'il Gházi, the celebrated Pír, is said to have defeated Kámeśvara, king of Kámarúpa. The story is told at length in a manuscript found by the late Mr. Damant in the possession of a fakír in charge of Ismá'il Gházi's tomb at Kuntá Duár, Rañgpur, but no reference is made to the subject in any Assam Chronicle or tradition.†

The records of these earlier Muhammadan invasions are very scanty, and very few traces of them now remain, beyond a few ruined fortifications (such perhaps as the Baidargarh already referred to), a few occasional finds of coins and the names of places indicating a previous Musalmán occupation.‡

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to give some account of the Báro Bhuiyás. It is generally admitted

Baro Bhuiyas.

that they were foreigners, but accounts differ as to the circumstances under which they came to Bengal & Assam. Buchanan's version is that twelve "persons of very high distinction, and mostly named Pála, came from the west and settled" at Mahásthán. He was of opinion that they belonged to the Bhungiyá tribe. Cunningham on the other hand thinks that they were Bráhmaṇs and that the name Bhuiyá is a corruption of Bhumihára, a term applied to them as indication of the fact that they had taken to cultivation as a means of livelihood. He says that they still call themselves Bábhán, and claim to be Bráhmaṇs, but that their enemies say that they are the descendants of men of low caste whom Jarásandha raised to the priesthood. He mentions that they form a large part of the population of Magadha, the chief representative of the clan being the Rájá of Tekári, and from this he surmises that the Pála Rajas "must have been of "this caste, as they would appear to have been descendants of some of "the Báro Bhuihár Pálas, while in their inscriptions they are silent as "to their ancestry."

* Alamgírámah, p. 731.

† J. A. S. B. 1874, p. 216.

‡ 30 silver coins were recently discovered near Gauháti by a cooly working on the Assam-Bengal Railway. They bore dates from 1310 to 1399 A. D. Most of them were coins issued by the independent Sultáns of Bengal. Maḥmúd Sháh II, Ghíyásu'd-dín Bahádúr Sháh, Ilyas Sháh, &c. A previous find of 33 coins at Gauháti in 1880 formed the subject of an article by Dr. Hoernle in the J. A. S. B. of 1881, p. 53.

Buchanan's identification of the Báro Bhuiyás with the aboriginal tribe called Bhungiyá or Bhuiyá was endorsed by Dalton and other writers, but Dr. Wise has made it clear that the word "Bhuiyá" has nothing to do with caste but is simply a word formerly used to denote a chief or ruler.* He shows that one at least of the "Bhuiyás" was a Musalmán, and quotes Janic as follows:—"Non se tamen dixere reges sed *Boiones*, quasi forsán Principes." Bhuiyá therefore simply means chief, and connotes nothing regarding the caste of the persons to whom it is applied.

Why these Bhuiyás should always be referred to as 12 in number is less clear. It may be that the term was originally "Bar" or "great," and somehow got changed in course of time to Báro or twelve; but this seems unlikely. All that can be said in explanation is that twelve seems to be a favourite number to be fixed for councillors or feudatories in the constitution of kingdoms in this part of India. The Rájá of Jaintiá had twelve *dalais*, and we shall see subsequently that when Viśva Simha came to the throne, he appointed twelve chief Ministers of State.†

The tradition current in Assam regarding the immigration of the Báro Bhuiyás of this Province is as follows:—A Rájá of Kamathapura named Durlabha Náráyaṇa went to war with another Rájá named Dharma Náráyaṇa, who called himself Gauḍeśvara—the Lord of Gauḍa.‡ When peace was concluded Gauḍeśvara§ sent seven houses of Bráhmaṇs and seven of S'údras (Kayasthas) to Durlabha who settled them on his frontier as lords of the marches and gave them lands and slaves. From the position accorded to them, it seems certain that they must have been persons of position in their own country. The names of the seven Bráhmaṇs were Kṛishṇa Paṇḍita, Raḡhupati, Rámavara, Lohár, Báyan, Dharma and Mathurá; and of the seven Kayasthas—Hari, S'rí Hari, S'rípati, S'rídhara, Chidánanda, Sadánanda and Chaṇḍivara. The last mentioned, who was the ablest and

* It is in fact simply the Sanskrit equivalent of the Persian word Zamíndár. The title was sold by the last kings of Cachar to any one willing to pay for it. Dr. Wise's essays on the Báro Bhuiyás of Bengal will be found in the J. A. S. B. 1874, p. 197 and 1875, p. 181.

† Cf. also the 12 *misals* of the *Khálisa*.

‡ The whole story is told at length in the *Guru Charitra*.

§ It appears that this title was often claimed, even by petty princes, and in the time of the visit to Pauṇḍradeśa of Jayapíḍa, the Rájá of Kásmír (779-813 A. D.) there were no less than six petty princes in the province of Gauḍa or Varendra all of whom claimed the title of Gauḍeśvara. The same state of affairs is said by Táránátha to have prevailed in the beginning of the ninth century, immediately before the rise of the Pála princes. (Arch. Sur. of Ind. Vol. XV, p. 111.)

most learned, was chief of the Báro Bhuiyás, and acted as their priest, from which fact he was also known as Devidása.* A story is told of Chaṇḍivara to the effect that he and the other Bhuiyás† went home to fetch their families, and that on starting to return they were seized by Gauḍeśvara and cast into prison. Shortly afterwards a paṇḍit from Benares visited the country and defeated all the learned men there in argument. The king confronted him with Chaṇḍivara, who soon overcame him, and he left the country covered with shame at his defeat. This so pleased the king that he at once released Chaṇḍivara and his companions and supplied them with boats in which to return to Kámarúpa. They went and settled at Paimagurí, where Chaṇḍivara earned the gratitude of the peasantry by constructing a bund in Baṅsí pargana, which the Chaudhrí of the place, by name Gandharva Rái, had in vain attempted to make. Subsequently the Bhotiás raided and carried off a number of people including Chaṇḍivara's son Rájadhara. Gandharva Rái fled to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, but Chaṇḍivara with the other Bhuiyás followed up the Bhotiá raiders and rescued their captives.

After Nílámbara had been overthrown by the Musalmáus under Husain Sháh and the latter had in their turn been expelled by the Ahoms, the country appears to have been broken up, as it had often been before, into numerous petty kingdoms, and amongst the rulers of these small principalities were twelve Bhuiyás, but whether these were descendants of the Bhuiyás imported by Devcśvara or not is uncertain.

* His son Rájadhara was the great grandfather of Saṅkara Deva, the celebrated religious reformer.

† The following list of Bhuiyás is taken from Lakshmináráyaṇa's *Purushávali*: Cháru, Ugurí, Kusum, Kália, Lukí, Jhágáoñ, Kabila, Karṇapur, Phulgurí, Bijuí, Dighala and Pratáp. Of these Ugurí, Lukí, Jhágáoñ, Karṇapur, Phulgurí, Bijuí and perhaps Dighala are names of places, and Cháru, Kusum, Kália, Kabila and Pratáp are the names of rulers whose states are not mentioned. The twelve Bhuiyás were not the only rulers in the country during this period of anarchy. Amongst others, two brothers named Chandana and Madana are mentioned by Buchanan Hamilton as having ruled for eight years at a place called Marálávása about twenty miles north of Kamaṭhapura. In a lecture by Bábú Rám Chandra Ghosh, quoted at page 407 of Hunter's *Statistical Account of Koch Bihár*, it is stated that Chandana and Madana were the children of Hariá Maṇḍal by his wife Jirá. But as will be seen hereafter, there is not sufficient evidence to justify this statement. The same Bábú adds that Chandana became king in 1511 and was succeeded by Viśva Síṃha in 1524, after a reign of thirteen years. Guṇábhírám mentions the kings of the following places as having been subdued by Viśva Síṃha:—Dímuriá, Beltola, Ráni, Luki, Bogái, Pántan, Boko, Bangáoñ, Moirápur, Bholágáoñ, Chaigáoñ, Barnagar, Darrang, Karáibári, Attiábári, Kamaṭhabári, and Balarámpur.

THE KOCH KINGS OF KÁMARÚPA.

In the meantime the Koch chiefs were gradually rising to power.

In tracing their history I shall follow generally the account given in the *Purushanáma* or *Vamśávali* of Rájá Lakshmi Náráyana Kuar, but shall collate this with other versions and endeavour, where they differ, to show which is most probably correct.

The account begins with the usual attempt to prove that the ruling tribe was of Kshattriya descent. It says that Sahasra, son of Rájá Haihaya stole the milch cow of Jamadagni. Paraśuráma, son of the latter, on hearing of the theft, slew Sahasra and restored the cow to his father. In revenge, Sahasra's sons, taking advantage of Paraśuráma's absence, killed Jamadagni and cut off his head. When Paraśuráma returned, he waged a war of extermination against the Kshattriyas and recovered the head of Jamadagni, whom he then restored to life. The remnant of the Kshattriyas, flying before the wrath of Paraśuráma, assumed the guise of Meches and discarded the sacred thread. They multiplied rapidly, and eventually a chief was born whose name was Hidri, and who had twelve children—Pánbar, Phedelá, Aorko Guabar, Fed Fedu, Barihana, Jukuabar, Káthya, Baihágn, Meghá, Goratá, Jogai and Dukharu.* These sons founded twelve families and from one of these sprang Hariá Maṅḍal. One day, when his wife Hírá was carrying his mid-day meal to him in the fields, she was met by S'iva, who had assumed the form of Hariá Maṅḍal, and in that guise consumed the food intended for her husband and had intercourse with her. There was some misunderstanding between her and her husband in the evening, but matters were soon put right, for S'iva appeared to Hariá in a dream and informed him that it was he who had eaten his food and taken such liberties with his wife, and stated that as a result of his intimacy with her, a son would be born who would rise to be a mighty chief. To complete the story, the legend adds that the lady was none other than an incarnation of Párvatí, who had been made to take the form of a Meeháni as a punishment for causing S'iva's death by a curse. Ten months later, on the 1st day of the Bihn, the promised son was born, amidst universal rejoicings, and was named Bisu, in commemoration of the time of his birth. By his second wife Jírá or Dhírá, Hariá Maṅḍal himself begot a son, whom he named S'isu.

The *Purushanáma* continues, that in his boyhood Biśu was known as the chief of cowherds. When he grew up, he at once began to extend his father's principality by bringing the country ruled by the

* The occurrence of the number twelve will again be remarked. The *Purushanáma* also speaks of the twelve sons of Sahasra.

Bhuiyás under his power. He defeated the Bhuiyás of Ugurí and Luki* but was defeated by Cháru Bhuiyá. While wandering about after this defeat, he was met by Párvatí disguised as a Meeháni, and following her advice, he again attacked Cháru Bhuiyá at the time of the Baisákh Bihuá, when his soldiers had dispersed for the festival, and thus overcame and killed him and the few soldiers that were left with him. Following up this success, he defeated and slew the Bhuiyás of Phulguri and Bijni, the former of whom is described as being of the race of S'iva.† He gradually extended his power, and after defeating all the Bhuiyás, went and‡ built a magnificent city in Koch Bihár. He worshipped S'iva and Durgá and gave gifts to the disciples of Vishnu. Other accounts mention that he assumed the Hindú name of Viśva Simha and that his brother S'ísu called himself S'iva Simha, while the men of his tribe who accepted Hinduism described themselves as Rájavamsís. He gave alms to the priests, and astrologers, and also to the poor and to the visitors from distant countries. He made S'ísu Yuvarája, and appointed twelve ministers from the twelve chief families of the Meehes, viz :—Two councillors (one for foreign and one for internal affairs), a commander of the army, a bráhmaṇ, an astrologer, a physieian, a betelnut-bearer, a cook, a store-keeper, an accountant, a thár (prophet) and a porter. He also introduced a regular state organization by appointing *Thakuriás* over 20 coolies, *Saikiás* over 100, and *Haráris* over 1,000, *Unrás* over 3,000, and *Navábs* over 66,000. Excluding the old and the young, he took an account of his able-bodied male subjects, and found that the number of persons fit to carry arms amounted to no less than 5,225,000. He is said to have possessed numberless elephants, horses, asses, buffaloes, and camels. It is related that he went to make war on the Ahoms, but fell short of provisions on the way, and thinking it wrong to plunder, returned home.§ He was preparing to undertake a second expedition, when Kálí appeared to him and told him not to engage in war himself. She told him instead to marry, and prophesied that he would have eighteen sons, who would conquer the whole world. In accordance with the divine mandate, he married in one day eighteen wives according to the Gandharva ceremony. Two of these wives

* If this account can be relied on, it seems to prove that the Koch Kingdom rose in Kámarúpa and gradually extended itself westwards, instead of beginning in Raṅgpur as is generally stated.

† It may be interesting to note that the use of firearms is referred to in the account of his battles with the Bhuiyás.

‡ Guṇábhírāma says that he took from them as tribute muga silk, cotton, copper, tin, lead, silver, gold, iron, potters' clay, &c ,

§ The Ahom version which says that he was defeated and made tributary, is more likely to be the real explanation of his return.

came from Nepál, two from Kámarúpa, one from Kásmíra, four from Benares, three from S'onitapura (the Moderu Tezpur) and two from Mithilá. Ten months later, each of his wives gave birth to a son, the names of whom were Nara Simha, Mallá Deva, who was afterwards known as Nara Náráyaṇa, Sukladhvaja, Gosáñ Kamala, Maidan, Rám Chandra, Súra Simha, Mána Simha, Mechá, Vṛishaketu, Ráma Náráyaṇa, Auanta, Dípa Simha, Hemadhara, Megha Náráyaṇa, Jagat Chandra, and Súra.

Being undecided as to who should succeed him, Viśva Simha, following the advice of Sadá Síva, caused 18 different articles (including gold, silver, iron, earth, &c.) to be tied up in bundles, and asked his sons to bring each one a bundle. Nara Simha brought the bundle of gold, and so was appointed to be ruler of a foreign country. Mallá Deva brought the bundle of earth, and was thus selected to succeed his father as king. Sukladhvaja, who brought the bundle of iron, was made Yuvarája, while Gosáñ Kamala, because he brought the bundle of wheat, was declared to have for his inheritance unspotted fame and pure glory, and to be destined to construct roads, monasteries and tanks. Minor appointments were allotted to the other sons, according to the contents of their bundles.

Viśva Simha died, after reigning 25 years, of sores brought on by the curse of a Bráhmaṇ,* but before his death, he enjoined his ministers never to get brides for his family from foreign races, but only from amongst the Mech, Koch and Kachárá tribes. It is said that he was carried up to heaven from S'onitanagara in a chariot driven by Nandí, who had been sent to earth by Síva for this purpose.

Guṇábhírám tells a story which is not referred to in this Purusha-náma. He says that Viśva Simha re-discovered Kámákhyá. The story runs that he went to Niláchala, where he found only a few houses of Meches. No one was at home except one old woman, who was resting under a fig-tree, where there was a mound which she said contained a deity. Viśva Simha prayed that his followers might be caused to arrive, and his prayer was at once granted. He therefore sacrificed a pig and a cock, and resolved, when the country became quiet, to build a golden temple there. He ascertained that the hill was the site of the old temple of Kámákhyá, the ruins of which he discovered, while the image of the goddess herself was dug up from under the mound. Sub-

* He had asked the Bráhmaṇ why people worship the big toe of a Bráhmaṇ, and on being told in reply that it was because it contained white blood, which is the blood of Brahmá, he had his toe pierced through with a chisel. No white blood was seen, but red blood flowed and could not be stopped, and so the Bráhmaṇ died saying, "As you have caused me this pain, so you also shall die of sores."

sequently he re-built the temple, but instead of making it of gold, he placed a gold coin between each brick. He brought Bráhmaṇs from Kannauj, Mithilá, Benares, &c., to perform religious ceremonies at this and other temples. Guṇábhírám adds that in Viśva Simha's time Raṅgalugarh was the eastern boundary of Koch Bihár.

Taking advantage of the absence of Mallá Deva and Śukladhvaja, who had been sent to Benares to study under
 Nara Narayana. a hermit of the name of Brahmánanda, Nara Simha seized the throne. News of this occurrence was sent to Mallá Deva by his nurse, and he at once returned with Śukladhvaja and defeated Nara Simha, who fled to the Morang country. Mallá Deva and Śukladhvaja defeated the Morang king, and Nara Simha fled to Nepál, but the king of Nepál was similarly defeated, and he then took refuge in Kaśmíra. Being unable to cross the passes Mallá Deva gave up the pursuit and returned to his own country. The *Vaṁśávali* says that Nara Simha subsequently became ruler of Bhotán, and that Pallavas, or local rulers were appointed by him. Their names were Dagar, whose jurisdiction lay in the east; Tongsár in the south; and Páro in the west. Three Jongpons are also mentioned as rulers over Tasirjim, Púrṅakhátá and Undipherá, respectively, and reference is also made to the "great dewan of Duncerkál," the 'lord of correspondence.'

Returning to Mallá Deva and Śukladhvaja, it is stated that on their return Mallá Deva became king and assumed the name of Nara Náráyaṇa. He made Śukladhvaja his Yuvarája, under the name of Śílarái, the king of the kites. He at once began to turn his attention to the extension of his kingdom, and first of all, he determined to carry out the decision formed by his father to conquer the Ahoms. Bearing in mind the cause of his father's failure, he first of all arranged for the construction of a road as far as a place called Parasu Kutbar, and this task was entrusted to Gosáñi Kamala. The latter set to work with vigour, and at the end of a year had completed the road, and had also constructed tanks at regular intervals along it.* Nara Náráyaṇa then called in Hindú paṇḍits and astrologers, and, after following the usual Hindú observances, prepared to start. But before doing so, he organized a Kachári dance on the banks of the Sankosh, and calling in the aid of a Shamanist, went through the aboriginal rites of his tribe, this leaning to his old tribal superstitions being justified in the *Vaṁśávali* by the statement that Śiva himself had directed him to observe them. He then started. One night he halted at Tamtumani, where twelve tribes brought him pre-

* The remains of this road are still visible from North Lakhimpur; the portion which runs through North Kámrúp and the Mangaldai subdivision is still known as the Gosáñi Kamala Ali.

sents, in consequence of which the place was called Báraḍala. On another occasion he stopped at Bhramarakuṇḍa where he built a fort and a monastery on a hill called Níl Khámár, a family of Kacháris being appointed to attend on Triśúladeví, the goddess of the place. It is said that he fixed the Gosúñ Kamala Āli as the boundary north of which the Kachári, Koch and Mech aboriginal forms of worship should be practised, while south of it Hindú observances were to be followed. Further on he halted at Síngiri Parbat, and after that on the Bharali.

In the meantime, the Āhom king who had heard of the invasion, summoned a meeting of his councillors, and with their advice, caused an iron goat to be made. This goat he sent to Nara Náráyaṇa, saying that if he could sever its head from its body at one stroke he should have his kingdom, but not otherwise. Nara Náráyaṇa offered two goats to Kálí, and then taking a sharp sword struck off the head of the iron goat with such force that the sword buried itself in the earth. On hearing of this, the Āhom king was filled with fear, and fled to Charái Kharang.* Nara Náráyaṇa then entered Gaṛhgaón.† Finding that the Āhom king was not disposed to fight, Nara Náráyaṇa, after halting for a year at Gaṛhgaon sent word to him saying that if he wished to fight he should come prepared, and that if he did not come, and at the same time did not surrender, he would go and attack him at Charái Kharang. On receiving this message, the Āhom king agreed to acknowledge himself a feudatory of Nara Náráyaṇa, and sent as hostages a prince named Sundara and twenty families of the Ghar-mátba clan, together with one pot of gold and another of silver, 60 elephants and 60 pieces of cloth.‡

After that the Koch king left Gaṛhgaón and proceeded first to Maraṅg and thence to Demcra.

* According to other accounts, including that in Guṇábhírám's *Āsám Buranji*, the Āhom king is said to have for a time averted defeat by sending forward an army of S'údras mounted on cows. A similar stratagem is referred to in the *Rájamálatá* or *Chronicles of the kings of Tippera*.

† The *Purushanáma* states that this was formerly the capital of the Chutiyá Rájá. The Āhoms were unable to conquer this king and so made peace with him. Their ruler married his daughter, and through her discovered that her father's supremacy was due to the possession of a golden cat. He made his wife steal this for him, and when he had got it, he attacked and killed the Chutiyá Rájá, whose sons fled for refuge to the Miri and Miching country.

‡ Sundara and his comrades were subsequently released owing to Sundara having succeeded in worsting Nara Náráyaṇa in a gambling contest. The Āhom chronicles add that when they returned to their own country, they took back goldsmiths, blacksmiths, and other artificers with them. (Guṇábhírám's *Āsám Buranji* pp. 68 and 117.)

Subsequently he deputed Sílarái to go and conquer Harmesvara, the king of Hiḍamba or Cachar. It is related that Sílarái broke open the gate of the capital with two strokes of his riding whip.* Seeing this, Harmesvara feared to offer resistance and at once made his submission. He gave 84 elephants and other presents and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 70,000 silver and 1,000 gold mohars and 60 elephants.† The Koch king then sent messengers to the Rájá of Manipur, calling on him to submit and pay tribute, and the Rájá feeling himself too weak to resist so powerful a prince, at once complied with his requisition. His tribute is said to have been fixed at Rupees 20,000, 300 gold coins and ten good elephants. After this Sílarái gave battle to the king of Jaintiá and slew him with his own hand. Nara Náráyaṇa set up the deceased Rájá's son as king, after making him promise to pay an annual tribute, and then despatched Sílarái to wage war against the king of Tippera. It is said that Sílarái's army consisted of 40,000 men, and that in the battle which took place, no fewer than 18,000 men of the Tippera army were slain. The king is said to have met his death, like the king of Jaintiá, at the hands of Sílarái himself. Nara Náráyaṇa placed the deceased king's brother upon the vacant throne, and made him pay tribute to the extent of Rs. 10,000, one hundred gold mohars and thirty war horses. In the meantime, Víravanta the Rájá of Khairam, having heard of Nara Náráyaṇa's prowess and wishing to avoid the fate which had overtaken the kings of Jaintiá and Tippera, hastened to make submission. His tribute was fixed at 15,000 Rupees, 900 gold coins, 50 horses and 30 elephants. He was also made to promise not to stamp coins in his own name, but in that of Nara Náráyaṇa.‡ The next victory was over the Rájá of Ḍimuríá who was taken prisoner, but was subsequently released on his undertaking to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 7,000. In the course of this expedition, Nara Náráyaṇa is said to have straightened the course of the Brahmaputra opposite Páṇḍunátha, a place near the foot of the Niláchal hill, some four miles west of Gauháṭi. After stopping some time at a village

* Other similar feats are attributed to Sílarái. On one occasion he is said to have leapt over the Bharali river on the back of his war horse.

† This story of the invasion of Cachar by Nara Náráyaṇa is confirmed by a tradition current amongst the Deháns, a small tribe of that district, who claim to be descended from the Koches who invaded the district. According to their account, however, the leader of the expedition was not Sílarái, but his brother Gosáin Kamala.

‡ No coins of this king have as yet been found, and the earliest coin of the Rájás of Jaintiá which I have seen is dated more than a hundred years later. Excluding Ahom coins, the only extant coins of this period stamped by kings in Assam are those issued by Nara Náráyaṇa and his successors.

named Rohá, Nara Náráyaṇa determined to attack the king of Sírathā (Sylhet), whose kingdom is described as being near Jaintiá, and who is said to have been a very powerful prince. Messengers were sent calling upon him to submit, but this he refused to do, and Sílārái was accordingly despatched with a strong force to overcome him. He met the army of the Sylhet king, and a battle took place which lasted three days. At the end of this time as the scales of victory still hung in the balance, Sílārái became impatient, and so seizing his sword and shield, he rushed forward like the kite, from which he took his name, and attacked the hostile army. It is related that 100,000 soldiers fell before his all-destroying sword, and that at last the king of Sylhet himself was slain. The king's brother Asirái then tendered his submission and returned with Sílārái to the court of Nara Náráyaṇa, who appointed him king in the place of his brother and fixed his tribute at 100 elephants, 200 horses, 300,000 Rupees and 10,000 gold coins.*

Being thus victorious in three directions, Nara Náráyaṇa determined to invade the kingdom of Gaṇṇ (Gauḍa). Before doing so, he visited the temple of Kámákhya, which he found in ruins. He intended to rebuild it, but being possessed by Śani (or the planet Saturn) he postponed this pious act until after his proposed expedition. This incensed the goddess against him, and his army, which was led by Sílārái, was defeated by the Pasha of Gaṇṇ, after a fight which lasted for ten days. Sílārái himself performed prodigies of valour, and after his weapons had been broken he disdained to fly, and so continued to fight with rushes until they also were exhausted, and he was taken prisoner. Subsequently, through the favour of Káli, he succeeded in curing the Pasha's mother, who had been bitten by a snake which had been sent into her presence by Sílārái in the form of a rope. In return for this cure, Sílārái was released, and the Ganges was fixed as the boundary between the two kingdoms.

On his return home, he and his brother at once set about the erection of the Kámákhya temple.† Twice they erected a temple of stone, and each time it fell in a night. Then Párvatí appeared in a dream and

* Sylhet was conquered by the Musalmáns in 1384 A. D., but may have been temporarily independent at the period here referred to, which was a troublous one in Bengal. Or it may be that the king of Sylhet here referred to was the ruler of Láur, who long continued to maintain his independence of the Musalmán invaders.

† An inscription within the temple records its erection by Sílārái during the reign of his brother Nara Náráyaṇa. This inscription which bears date 1487 S'ak (1565 A. D.) will be referred to again further on. Other accounts say that the temple took ten years to build. (Gunábhírám's *Āśám Buranjí* page 68.)

said that the Musalmáns had destroyed the old stone temple, and as it was now the Kali Yuga, the new one should be constructed of bricks. The brick temple, was constructed in six months, and then Nara Náráyaṇa consecrated it with numerous sacrifices, including 140 men, whose heads he offered to the goddess on copper plates.* He made a grant of land for the maintenance of the shrine, and gave away alms to the extent of Rs. 25,000. He also caused a statue of himself to be made and placed within the temple.† At this time he caused roads, monasteries and tanks to be constructed, and trees to be planted. Under his auspices the Sástras were published and the Ratnamálá was composed, and even the common people were made to study religious books. Sáktaism was the State religion, but Vaiṣṇavism was more than tolerated, and great honour was done to Śaṅkara Deva, Deva Dámodara, and other Vaiṣṇava divines. The country enjoyed a period of peace and religion, and trade throve exceedingly.

Two years later, the Gauṛ Pasha's mother died, and Nara Náráyaṇa then combined with Akbar to attack him. Śílarái invaded his kingdom with an army from the east, while Rájá Mán Siūgh, who was in command of the Imperial army, advanced upon him from the west.

The ruler of Gauṛ being thus attacked from two sides at the same time was easily defeated, and his kingdom was then divided between the Koch king and the Emperor of Delhi. The Pasha himself fled to the country of the Feringhis.

While engaged on this expedition, news came from the capital that a son had been born to Śílarái.‡ The latter, however, was destined never to see him. He was attacked by small-pox and died on the banks of the Ganges, after enjoining his brother Nara Náráyaṇa to take care of his boy. Nara Náráyaṇa performed the funeral ceremonies with great pomp, and at the conclusion sacrificed a bull.

After Śílarái's death, a long period of peace ensued, during which the people enjoyed great prosperity, while Nara Náráyaṇa gave such encouragement to religion that he became known as "the pious king."

* The offering of human sacrifices was by no means uncommon among the Sákta of former times. Similar sacrifices were frequently offered at Sadiyá, and at Beltola in Kámrúp, and it was the abduction of four British subjects for this purpose which led to the annexation of Jaintiá in 1835.

† Two statues, said to represent Nara Náráyaṇa and Śílarái, are still to be seen within the temple. An older figure carved in the rock on the road leading up to it is said to represent Naraka, the first-recorded guardian of the shrine.

‡ It is related that in honour of this event grants of Brahmottar land were made in the village of Chinakoná (in the Maṅgaldái sub-division.) This grant still exists.

In the meantime Silarái's son, whose name was Raghu Rái, was growing up. He was a great favourite with the king, and when he attained the age of 16, two girls were given to him as wives. It is added that subsequently the number of his wives reached 120.

Shortly after Raghu Rái's marriage, Nara Náráyaṇa himself was at last blessed with a son, to whom he gave the name of Lakshmi Náráyaṇa.* Up to this time, Raghu Rái had lived in hopes of succeeding his uncle; but hearing that he was now likely to be passed over in favour of the latter's own son, he left the capital with a small following, and settled down at Baṇanagara, or Vijayanagar, where he excavated a tank and built a town called Ghilajaipur. Nara Náráyaṇa sent a messenger, named Para Kárji, to recall him; but he refused to return, and when Kárji invested the place in order to seize him, he fought with, and defeated him. On hearing of this, it is related that Nara Náráyaṇa professed to be pleased at his nephew's prowess, and as an acknowledgment thereof, sent him his wives, together with a large amount of money and jewels from the royal treasure-chest. A few months later, a heavy flood occurred, and taking advantage of it, Raghu made an expedition in boats and raided Bair Baku. When Nara Náráyaṇa heard of this, he went with an army to chastise him, but was prevented from attacking him by Raghu sending his 120 wives to attack Nara Náráyaṇa's army. When the latter heard of this, he determined not to fight and so came to terms.

The kingdom was divided into two parts, and it was settled that Raghu should rule the country east of the Saukosh and that Lakshmi should succeed his father as Rájá of the country west of that river. Raghu continued to reside at Baṇanagara. He visited five places of pilgrimage,—Gaṇeśa, Kedára, Gokarṇa, Garṇa, and Kámesvara; and re-built the Maṇikúṭa Temple, which had been broken by the Musalmáns.† He endowed it with grants of land, and when it was finished, he sacrificed at the shrine 700 men, whose heads he offered to the goddess in copper plates. He had a large number of sons, including Paríkshít, Indra Náráyaṇa, Jádurái, Bali Náráyaṇa, and Mána Simha. He is said to have been devoted to religion and to have made liberal gifts to Brahmáns. It is related that he buried 30,00,000 Rs. under the staircase of his palace. In the end he was killed by a demon (*daitya*) sent by an ascetic whose company he had exhorted his son Paríkshít to eschew.

* It is said that Nara Náráyaṇa married Kamala-priyá, the daughter of Sañkara Deva's brother Rám Rái. According to other accounts, however, it was Silarái who married her.

† This is the Hayagríva Temple at Hájo, which stands on the hill called Maṇi. An inscription in the temple, dated 1583 A. D., mentions Raghu Deva as the king under whose orders it was re-built.

Paríkshít, on the death of his father, went to Prágjyotishapura and worshipped three times at Kámákhyá. An astronomer attached to the temple foretold that unless he became king within two days, he would not get the kingdom for twelve years, and he accordingly set sail and proceeded with all haste to Baṛanagara, where he was hailed as king. It is said that his boatmen were so exhausted by their exertions that on arriving they all lay as if dead, and were only brought back to life by the tender ministrations of 140 girls (sent for the purpose by Paríkshít) who anointed their bodies with oil and acid fruits, and then passed the night with them. Next morning, says the *Vamśávali* each boatman was married to the girl with whom he had slept. Paríkshít is said to have built a town where North Gaulháṭi now stands, and to have mounted cannon at Paṇḍunátha, which were still in position at the time when the *Vamśávali* was composed. Subsequently war broke out between Paríkshít and Lakshmi Náráyaṇa, and the latter being worsted, went to Delhi, and giving his sister to the Emperor in marriage, implored him to send an army to his assistance.

In accordance with his request, Paransubha and Mukarram Khán were sent against Paríkshít. Paríkshít was defeated and then entrenched himself in a fort which he built on the banks of the Sankosh, which the Musalmáns besieged for a year without success. They then resorted to stratagem, and by floating rafts of plantain trees down the river by night, made Paríkshít believe that they had crossed it and were marching on his capital. Under this impression, he abandoned his intrenchments and hurried back to Vijayanagara.

In the meantime his brother Bali Náráyaṇa, after taking refuge for a year with a Bára Bhuiyá family residing at Maniári village in Dar-rang, went to the Ahom king, Svarga Náráyaṇa, and invoked his aid against the Musalmáns. The latter took the field with a large army, and defeated the Musalmáns, who fled across the Karatoyá. Svarga Náráyaṇa then placed Bali Náráyaṇa, whom he re-named Dharma Náráyaṇa, in charge of the conquered country, the boundaries being on the east the Bharali, on the west the Karatoyá, on the north the Gomiri mountains, and on the south the hills of Siri.

COMPARISON OF THE *VAMŚÁVALI* WITH OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

Thus far the *Vamśávali* of Rájá Lakshmi Náráyaṇa Kuar. I now refer briefly to other accounts of the events with which it deals.* And first of all, as to the parentage of Bisu and Sisu.

* Minor points in which other accounts corroborate it, have been noted *passim* in the abstract of the *Vamśávali* given above.

Rájá Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vaiśávali* agrees with it in all particulars, and the account given by Guṇábhírám in his *Asám Buranji* is also practically the same. In the latter, however, Hájo is mentioned as the father of Hírá and Jírá; it does not appear from his account that either of them had a husband, and Śiva is said to have been the father of Sisu as well as of Bísu. Buchanan Hamilton says that Hájo Koch had two daughters, Hírá and Jírá, of whom the former was married to Hariyá Mech. She had a son, Bísu, while her sister (whose husband is not mentioned) had a son, Sisu. He adds that Śiva was claimed as the progenitor of both Bísu and Sisu. The Raikat family of Baikunṭhpur claim to be descended from Sisu, and over that he was the brother and not the cousin of Bísu. Another account says that Chandan and Madan were the children of Hariyá Mech by his wife Jírá and that Śísu and Bísu were born of his wife Hírá by the god Śiva.*

From these accounts we may, I think, conclude that Śísu and Bísu were the children of Hariyá Mech by his wives Hírá and Jírá, and that the latter were daughters of Hájo, who was of the Koch tribe, a fact which is proved not only by the authorities mentioned above, but also by the fact that the existing representatives of the family still describe themselves as "Koch," and by the Musalmán names for the country, Koch Bihár and Koch Hájo. Ralph Filch also refers to Śukladhvaja as Shukl Koch. There is not sufficient evidence for assuming that Chandan and Madan belonged to this family.

There is less unanimity regarding the kings by whom the Koch kingdom was consolidated and extended and the period at which it was divided into two parts.

The division of the country into two kingdoms.

According to Buchanan Hamilton†, it was Hájo who founded the kingdom, and Viśva Simha who divided it into two parts, giving the position east of the Sankosh to Śukladhvaja and the position west of that river to Nara Náráyaṇa. The same version is given in the family history of the Rájás of Bijni. Other authorities however, agree with Rájá Lakshmí Náráyaṇa's *Vaiśávali*. Bábú Rám Chandra Ghosh, to whose lecture reference has already been made, says that Nara Náráyaṇa "with the assistance and advice of his younger brother Śukladhvaja, otherwise called Śílarái, extended his kingdom in all directions. He conquered the whole of Kámarúpa and carried off in triumph the *chhattra* or umbrella of the king of Assam. The king gave to his elder

* Lecture delivered by Bábú Rám Chandra Ghosh before the Koch Bihár Hitaishiní Sabhá, and printed in Calcutta at the expense of the Ráj in 1865.

† Hunter's Statistical Account of Raṅgpur, page 351.

“brother, Nara Simha, the pargana of Paṅgá; and to his younger brother ‘Sukladhvaja, together with the title of Rájá, he gave Bijní, Darrang, ‘Bentalí (*sic*, Beltola?) and the northern part of the Kámákhyá “kshettra.”

In Biśveśvar’s *Āsám Buranji*, the agreement is still greater. He says: “Rájá Nara Náráyaṇa, having no male issue, determined to appoint “his nephew Raghu Deva as his successor. When old, he had a son, and “Raghu Deva became hopeless. The latter therefore, quitted one day the “palace, under the pretext of going a hunting, but the Rájá, in order “to console him, allotted to him a portion of the Ráj.”

The account given by Guṇábhírám on pages 59–71 of his *Āsám Buranji* also confirms that contained in the *Vamśávali*, and so does the allusion to the conquest of Gaṛhgáoñ in the Ahom chronicles, and also the Musalmán version of the events dealt with in the *Vamśávali* as described in the *Akbarnámah*, except that in the latter, Raghu’s rebellion is said to have taken place on the death of Nara Náráyaṇa, and not during his life time.*

In addition, we have contemporaneous evidence in the shape of two inscriptions, one of which is inside the Kámákhyá temple and the other in the temple of Hayagríva at Hájo. The former runs as follows:

“Glory be to king Malládeva, who by virtue of his mercy, is kind to the people; “who in archery is like Arjuna, and in charity like Dadhíchi and Karṇa; he is “like an ocean of all goodness, and he is versed in many śástras; his character is “excellent, in beauty he is as bright as Kandarpa; he is a worshipper of Kámá- “khyá. His younger brother Sukladeva built this temple of bright stones on the “Níla hillock, for the worship of the goddess Durgá, in 1487 Śaka (1565 A. D.). “His beloved brother Sukladhvaja again, with universal fame, the crown of the “greatest heroes, who like the fabulous Kalpataru, gave all that was devoutly asked “of him, the chief of all devotees of the goddess, constructed this beautiful “temple with heaps of stones on the Níla hill in 1487 Śaka.”

Amongst the stone figures in the interior of this temple are two which are said to represent Malládeva and his brother Sukladhvaja.

The inscription inside the temple of Hayagríva may be translated thus:—

“There was a ruler of the earth named Viśva Simha; his illustrious son, the “most wise king Malládeva, was a conqueror of all enemies. In gravity and “liberality and for heroism he had a great reputation, and he was purified by “religious deeds. After him was born his brother Sukladhvaja who subdued

* It may be explained here that Muhammadan historians refer to the countries ruled by Parikshit and Lakshmi Náráyaṇa as Koch Hájo and Koch Bihár respectively. Nara Náráyaṇa was known to the Musalmáns as Bál Gosaiñ, and Sukladhvaja as Shukl Gosaiñ.

“many countries. The son of this Sukladhvaja was king Raghudeva, who was like the greatest man of the Raghu race : his glories spread out in all directions ; the lord of Kámarúpa, in obedience to the order of destiny, is the slayer of the wicked, who was like water to the flames of the fire of sorrow of the vast populace. Of the seeds of Sukladhvaja, a king was born of the name of Raghudeva, who consoles innumerable persons, and is a worshipper of the feet of Krishna ; the king coming of age had a temple built on the hillock called Mani hillock, in 1505 Saka (1583 A. D.) The most skilful and efficient artisan S’rídharma himself “built it.”

Apart from the authorities quoted in favour of the version given in the *Vamśávali*, it seems probable that that version is correct ; first, because it is far more detailed than any other, and secondly, because it is the version given by the descendants of Silarái who would not have been likely to represent him as a subject of Nara Náráyaṇa if he had really been an independent prince. We may, therefore, accept the story as told in the *Vamśávali* as substantially correct.

The only alternative to accepting the version given in the *Vamśávali* is by supposing Silarái to have outlived his brother and to have rebelled when Lakshmi Náráyaṇa succeeded him. This is the version given in the *Akbarnámah* (J. A. S. B. 1872, page 53), and if correct would simplify the meaning of the inscription in the temple at Hájo. The account given in the *Vamśávali* is however, so circumstantial that, in the absence of further evidence, it seems impossible to gainsay it.

MUSALMÁN INVASIONS DURING THE PERIOD DEALT WITH IN THE VAMŚÁVALI.

The *Vamśávali* says very little about the relations of the Koch kings with the Mualmáns, and it will therefore be useful to supplement it in this respect by accounts drawn from other sources.

And first should be mentioned the invasion of Kálá Páhar, otherwise known as Rájú, which took place in
 Kala Pahar's invasion. 1553 A. D. It is said that Nara Náráyaṇa was afraid to fight him, and allowed him to pass up the Brahmaputra unmolested. He was a convert from Hinduism, and like all apostates, was a zealous persecutor of the faith which he had before professed, so that his name is remembered to this day, both in Assam and Orissa, as the arch destroyer of temples and images. To him is attributed the destruction of the old temples at Kámákhya and Hájo, but beyond these acts of sacrilege, he appears to have left no mark in the country. His invasion is not referred to in the *Vamśávali*, except incidentally in the statement that Nara Náráyaṇa rebuilt Kámákhya “which the wicked Musalmáns had destroyed.*”

* I have not referred in the text to the narrative of Ralph Fitch who visited Koch Bihár between 1563 and 1581, and states that the king then ruling was

Nara Narayana's submission to the Emperor. Another incident not mentioned in the *Vamsávali* is that related in the following extract from the *Akbar-námah* :*—

“To the events of this time (1578 A. D.) belongs the arrival of the *Peshkash* from Bengal and Koch Bihár. Raja Bál Gosaiñ (Nara *Náráyana*) who is Zamindár of Koch, submitted again, and sent valuable presents from Bengal, with 54 elephants.”

On the other hand, the Musalmán historians of the period make no mention of the assistance said to have been rendered by Nara *Náráyana* in the subjugation of Dáúd Sháh.

The *Akbar-námah* tells us that when hostilities broke out between Lakshmi *Náráyana* and the ruler of the eastern Koch kingdom, the former made his submission to the Emperor and met Rájá Mán Siñgh at Anandapur. It is added that he gave his daughter in marriage to the latter, and not to the Emperor as stated in the *Vamsávali*.

In the *Tázuk i Jahángirí* it is stated that, in 1618 A. D., Lakshmi *Náráyana* paid his respects personally at court in Gujrát and presented a *nazzar* of 500 mohars.

The invasion of Parikshit's kingdom however, is attributed, not to the initiation of Lakshmi *Náráyana*, but to a complaint made by Raghunátha, the Zamindár of Sosang, whose family Parikshit had imprisoned.

The *Pádisháhu-námah* contains a full account of the invasion which followed. The following abridgment is taken from the translation given by Blochmann in the J. A. S. B. for 1872 (pages 53–62). Mukarram Khán invaded Koch Hajo with 6,000 horse, 12,000 foot and 500 ships, and took Parikshit's fort at Dhubrí, at which place he halted

named Suckel Conse (Sukl Koch or Sukladhvaja), because the part of the kingdom which he visited was west of the Sankosh (cf. Blochmann, J. A. S. B., page 240), and this part has never been claimed as having at any time belonged to S'ukladhvaja or his descendants. It is clear, therefore, that there must be some mistake, and as Sukladhvaja was a far more prominent man than his elder brother, the real king, it is not unlikely that Ralph Fitch thought that he was the ruler *de jure* as well *de facto*. Or it may be, that Ralph Fitch's visit took place during the year for which, according to Gupábhírám, Nara *Náráyana* left his kingdom in charge of Silarái and wandered about in disguise, in order to avoid the disaster which it was supposed would ensue from the influence of the planet Saturn, under which the astrologers asserted that he had had the misfortune to come. The story of his temporary abdication is not improbable, as the Garaks have always exercised almost unlimited power over credulous converts to Hinduism, and we have an exact parallel in Ahom history in the case of the king Siva Sirnáha, who abdicated in 1720 A. D. in favour of his wife Phúlésvari, in consequence of an adverse prediction by the astrologers attached to his court.

* Lucknow edition, III, page 207.

during the rains. Paríkshít was defeated in a naval engagement in the Gajádhar river and retreated, first to Khelal and afterwards to Budhnagar on the Manás, where he at last surrendered, and by the Emperor Jahángír's orders, was sent to Court. His brother Bali Náráyana, or Baldeo, as he is called by the Musalmán historian, fled to the Ahom king.

The Musalmáns proceeded, under Sayyad Hakím and Sayyad Abá Baqr, to invade the country of the Ahoms, but were destroyed in a night attack. A fuller account of this invasion is contained in the Ahom chronicles, where it is stated that the Musalmáns proceeded as far as Bishpunáth. They were at first victorious and took many captives, but were subsequently defeated by the Ahoms, who had called in the aid of the Kacháris of Kháspur. The cause of the invasion is said to have been the murder by the Ahom garrison, at Koliabar, of a Muhammadan trader who was suspected of being a spy. It is stated that Abá Baqr (who is called Bábákar in the Ahom *Buranji*) and his son Ghíyásu'd-dín were slain in the battle, and that the body of the latter was taken back to Hájo and buried there.*

The *Pádisháhnámah* continues that Bali Náráyana† then persuaded

* Guṇábhírám says that this invasion is described in the *Guru Bhatima*, a collection of hymns written shortly after the time of the occurrence by Saṅkar Deva and his disciple and successor, Mádhava. I have not been able to procure a complete collection of these hymns, but in a selection of them published by Haribilás Gupta, the only Musalmán invasion referred to (page 79) is one in which the ruler of Gauṛ is said to have been utterly defeated by Nara Náráyana. In this account, the destruction of images is not mentioned, and it is possible that some other invasion is referred to.

† The Ahoms called him Dharma Náráyana. In Ahom histories it is said that Bali Narayan or Ragbu Deva (accounts differ) gave the daughter of the latter—Maṅgaldái by name—to Pratápa Sírnha in marriage. Maṅgaldái town and river are said to be named after this princess.

Ghíyásu'd-dín is said to have been a very pious and learned man, and the sanctity attaching to his tomb was consequently so great, that it became a very sacred place in the eyes of the Musalmáns, and was accordingly known as Powa Mekka. The origin of this name is differently accounted for by a writer in the *Calcutta Review* of 1867. He says that after the death of Husain Sbah's son, Dányál. Sulṭán Ghíyásu'd-dín succeeded him, and brought a colony of Musalmáns to Hájo and made large assignments of lands for religious purposes. He resolved to build a grand mosquo at Hájo, and brought earth from Mekka to give additional sanctity to the place. He died however before completing the mosquo, and was buried under the holy earth. It is not known from what source this writer derived his information, but it seems on the face of it more probable than the other story, as it is hard to believe that a vanquished army would carry a corpse so great a distance as from Bishpunáth to Hájo. On the other hand, it is unlikely that Musalmáns re-

the Ahoms to invade Hájo, and the latter agreed and sent him thither with an army. He retook Darrang, and reinforcing his army by some discontented Musalmán Jágirdárs of Hájo, seized also pergunas Luki and Bháomanti, and finally attacked 'Abdu's-salám, the Musalmán Governor of the country.

It is not stated how long these events took, but it would appear from other sources of information, that a considerable time must have elapsed between the retaking of Darrang and the attack on 'Abdu's-salám which led, as will be noted further on, to the defeat and death of Bali Náráyana.

The defeat of Paríkshit is stated to have taken place in 1614 A. D. and the final overthrow of Bali Náráyana in 1637. The Ahom chronicles place the defeat of Ábá Baqr in 1549 Sak or 1627 A. D. and state that his army was pursued and the Ahom rule extended as far as Gaulháí, and that Bali was set up as a tributary of the Ahoms in Darrang and Gaja Náráyana, brother of the latter, at Beltolá. Subsequently, it is stated, Pratápa Simha became lord paramount of the Rájás of Rání, Luki, Mairápur, and other places. These events must have taken time to bring about, and it may therefore, I think, be assumed that Bali became ruler in Darrang at least, if not also in part of Kámrúp, immediately after Ábá Baqr's defeat in 1672, so that he ruled there for ten years before his final conflict with the Musalmáns.*

On being attacked by Bali, 'Abdu's-salám reported matters to Islám Khán, Governor of Bengal. Reinforcements were at once sent to him, but owing to the treachery of Sattrajit, the Thánádár of Páñđu, the dispositions of the Musalmáns were not as effective as they might otherwise have been. In several engagements in the neighbourhood of Páñđu, however, success remained with the Muhammadan army.

Subsequently, as 'Abdu's-salám was moving his fleet from S'ríghát towards Hájo, he was attacked at night by the Ahom fleet which numbered 500 ships. Sattrajit took the first opportunity to retire with his fleet, and the Musalmáns were beaten. Bali Náráyana followed up this success by laying siege to Hájo, and after cutting off his supplies, forced 'Abdu's-salám to treat. The latter went with his brother to the hostile camp, where he was at once seized and sent off to Gaṅgháoñ.

remained at Hájo after prince Dányál's defeat, as Vísva Simha was then rapidly rising to power. Besides, the *Fathiyah i 'Ibriyah* says that the whole of that prince's army was killed or captured. (J. A. S. B. 1872, page 79.)

* In Guṇábhírám's *Asám Buranjí* it is said that Bali Náráyana fixed his capital at Mañgalqái in Darrang, and ruled well.

The Musalmáns then tried to force their way through the enemy, but were all cut up in the attempt.

In the meantime, Paríkshít's son Chandra Náráyana, who had established himself with 6,000 or 7,000 Ahoms and Koches at Karaibárá, was attacked by the troops left at Sríghát and forced to retreat to pargana Solmárá. He was killed shortly afterwards. The Musalmáns then marched to Dhubrí where they found and arrested Sattrajít, who was subsequently executed for his treachery, and thence proceeded to Jogi-ghopá, at which place as well as at Hírápúr on the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra, Bali Náráyana had erected strong fortifications, his fleet being anchored between the two forts. They were harassed on their way by the enemy's troops, but drove them off, and after several assaults, they forced Bali Náráyana to retreat, and followed him across the Manás river. He retreated to Budhnagar where he threw up a strong entrenchment, but withdrew to Choithri on hearing that Muḥammad Zámán was marching against him with a strong detachment, under the guidance of Uttama Náráyana, the son of Sardárbar, Zamindár of Budhnagar, who was well acquainted with the country.

This detachment halted at Bishunpur for the rains, but was shortly afterwards attacked by Bali Náráyana, who had received reinforcements which brought the strength of his army up to 40,000 men. He threw up fortifications at the Kalápáni river, about three miles from Bishunpur, behind which he encamped on a well-selected site, protected by rising ground, a river difficult to cross, and dense jungle. From this vantage ground he harassed the Musalmáns by repeated night attacks.

At the close of the rains, in spite of Bali Náráyana's efforts to prevent it, a junction was effected between the detachment at Bishunpur and the main body of the Musalmán army, which had spent the rains at Chandankot. Having united their forces they attacked and defeated Bali Náráyana, who fled to Darrang. A son of the Ahom king was taken prisoner in this battle and was put to death together with all the other prisoners. The Ahom forts at Páñdu and Sríghát were then taken together with 500 war sloops and 300 guns, and Koch Hájo again became a Musalmán province. Fort Kajlí (at the junction of the Kallang and the Brahmaputra) was also taken, and a detachment was sent to Darrang to hunt down Bali Náráyana who fled to Singirí, where he and his two sons shortly afterwards died. Gauháti was selected as the seat of Government of the Musalmán proconsul, and a financial settlement of the country was effected.

As already stated, the final overthrow of Bali Náráyana is said to have taken place in 1637 A. D. Strango to say no mention of this struggle is made in any local history.

DATES OF THE KINGS MENTIONED IN THE *VAMŚÁVALI*.

Rájá Lakshmi Náráyana's *Vamśávali* mentions only one date—that of the erection of the Kámákhyá temple, and it is not very easy to fix the exact dates of the kings to whom it refers. Some dates are given in the *Vamśávali* of Prasiddha Náráyana, in Guṇábhírám's *Asám Buranji*, in Buchanan Hamilton's account of Raṅgpur and elsewhere,* but these authorities often differ amongst themselves, and it is therefore necessary to examine the matter in some detail.

It will perhaps be easiest to arrive at the truth by dealing in the first instance with the dates of Rájá Nara Náráyana. Three different dates are assigned for the time when he ascended the throne in succession to his father Viśva Símbha, viz., 1528 A. D. by Guṇábhírám, 1534 in Prasiddha Náráyana's *Vamśávali*, and 1555 by Bábú Rám Chandra Ghosh.

His death is said to have occurred in 1584 A. D., and Prasiddha Náráyana's *Vamśávali* and Guṇábhírám's *Asám Buranji* agree in fixing 1581 as the date of Raghu's accession to power in the eastern part of the old Koch kingdom, while the inscription in the Hayagríva temple at Hájo, which was built during his reign and bears date 1583 A. D., helps to confirm this as the date of the division of the kingdom.

It is recorded in the *Akbarnámah* that Lakshmi Náráyana who had then succeeded his father, made his submission to the Delhi Emperor and paid his respects to Raja Mán Síng in 1596 A. D. On the other hand, the Musalmán historians refer to Nara Náráyana as still reigning in 1578.† It is thus certain that Nara Náráyana died between 1573 and 1596 A. D. and we may therefore, I think, confidently accept 1584 as the approximate date of his death.‡

* I do not refer to the dates given in the manuscript copy of the Yoginí Tantra in the possession of a Bráhmán of Haulí Mohanpur, as it appears that they are not trustworthy, so far as these earlier kings are concerned. Prior to the accession of Mahondra Náráyana in 1660, only four dates are given, viz., the erection of Hájo and Kámákhyá and the accessions of Viśva Síng and Raghu Deva. The two former, which could always be ascertained from the inscriptions in the temples themselves are correct, but the two latter—1495 A. D. and 1555 A. D. are obviously wrong. It seems probable that the collection of dates in this volume was not commenced until long after the time of those two kings, and that when it was undertaken, their dates were filled in by guess work.

† Bloehmann, J. A. S. B. 1872, page 53.

‡ Bloehmann, J. A. S. B. 1875, page 306. The name of the ruler mentioned in the Musalmán account is Bál Gosaiñ, but this is clearly only another name for Nara Náráyana. Bloehmann says that Bál Gosaiñ was the son of Nara Náráyana and father of Lakshmi Náráyana, but this must be a mistake, as neither in the very full account contained in the *Vamśávali* nor in any other local narrative, is mention made of any

It is less easy to come to a definite conclusion regarding the date of his accession. According to the *Vamśávali* of Prasiddha Náráyaṇa, this took place in 1534; Guṇábhírám following Bísveśvar places it in 1528 and Bábú Rám Chandra Ghosh in 1555 A. D.* The last mentioned date may be at once rejected, on the testimony of a silver coin of this king which was found some years ago in the Gáro Hills and published in the J. A. S. B. for 1875, page 306.† This coin is dated 1477 S'ak (1555 A. D.), or the very year fixed for Nara Náráyaṇa's accession by Bábú Rám Chandra, and as he had to fight with his brother Nara Síṃha before obtaining the throne, it is extremely unlikely that he began to issue coins in the very first year of his reign. It is much more likely that the time when this money was coined, formed the second period in his reign, namely, the interval of peace which followed his earlier expeditions and preceded the second war against the ruler of Gauṛ.

Perhaps the best way of arriving at the probable date of his succession will be to calculate it from several independent data, and then to strike an average. The *Akbarnámah* says that his son was born when he was fifty years of age. As the latter ascended the throne on his father's death without, it would appear, the help of guardians, he cannot at that time have been less than 15 years of age. On this calculation Nara Náráyaṇa must have been born in 1519 A. D., and as he was still a student when his father died, he cannot at that time have been much more than 15 years of age. This would bring his accession to 1534 A. D., which is the very date mentioned in Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vamśávali*.

Another way of arriving at the probable date of his succession is by calculating what time would be required for the different events referred to in the history of his reign, which occurred prior to the erection of Kámákhyá temple, the date of which (1565 A. D.) is known to us by the inscription in the temple itself and by the concurrent testimony of Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vamśávali*, and the manuscript edition

ruler between Nara Náráyaṇa and Lakshmí, and all alike agree in saying that the latter was the son of the former. Besides Blochmann says that the brother of Bál Gosaiñ was S'ukl Gosaiñ, who can be none other than S'ukladhvaja. In his notice of the *Akbarnámah* (J. A. S. B. 1872, page 52) he quotes a passage which says that Bál Gosaiñ lived the life of an ascetic and did not marry until he was 50 years old, when he took a wife by whom he had a son named Lakshmí Náráyaṇa. Lastly, on page 100 of the number of the *Journal* just quoted, Blochmann himself, in a footnote, explains that Nara Náráyaṇa is called Bál Gosaiñ in the *Akbarnámah*.

* Statistical Account of Koch Bihár, page 407.

† A similar coin of Nara Náráyaṇa bearing the same date had been previously published in J. A. S. B. 1856, page 547, by Rajendralála Mitra.

of the Yogini Tantra in the possession of the Bráhmaṇ of Haulí Mohanpur.

Briefly these events are :—

- (1.) Expulsion and pursuit of Nara Simha.
- (2.) Construction of Gosaiñ Kamala Ali. This is said to have taken a year to make, but the real time it took was probably considerably longer.
- (3.) Invasion of the Ahom kingdom. The Ahom chronicles mention at least two expeditions, and the *Vaṁśávali* relates that Nara Náráyana remained a year at Garhgaóñ before the Ahom king submitted.
- (4.) Conquest of Hiṛamba or Cachar.
- (5.) War with the king of Jaintiá.
- (6.) War with the king of Tipperah.
- (7.) War with the king of Dimaruá.
- (8.) War with the king of Sylhet.
- (9.) War with the ruler of Gauṛ.
- (10.) Silaráí's detention at Gauṛ.
- (11.) Erection of Kámákhya. According to the *Vaṁśávali* this was carried out in six months, but other accounts say that the temple took ten years to build.

It is difficult to arrive at any exact conclusion as to the time which these events occupied, but bearing in mind the difficulties of locomotion at that time, and the fact that between each war it would probably be necessary for the Rájá to spend some time attending to the internal affairs of his kingdom and consolidating his rule, I do not think it would be safe to allow a smaller period than 30 years for these occurrences. Deducting this period from the date of the erection of Kámákhya, we get 1535 A. D., as the date of his accession, which is again very nearly the date quoted in Prasiddha Náráyana's *Vaṁśávali*. On the other hand, the Ahom chronicles fix 1562 as the date of his invasion of their country, and as this is one of the earliest events of his reign as recorded in the *Purushandámah*, it would seem that his reign could not have commenced long before that date. As, however, it is certain that Kámákhya was rebuilt in 1565, and all the intervening events could not possibly have occurred within the short space of three years, it is clear either that this date is incorrect or else that the *Vaṁśávali* does not record events in their historical sequence. On the whole the weight of the evidence seems to show that Nara Náráyana came to the throne in 1534 A. D., or soon afterwards.

The same dates, of course, represent the conclusion of Viśva Simha's dates. The same dates, of course, represent the conclusion of Viśva Simha's reign. As regards its commencement, it will be remembered that Nilámbara was over-

thrown by Husain Sháh in 1498 A. D., and that afterwards Chandana and Madana reigned for a few years at Marálávása, a place some 20 miles north of Kamathapura. If, therefore, Chandana and Madana ruled the whole of the country formerly under the sway of the Khyen Rájás, it would be impossible for Viśva Simha to have begun to rule before 1515–1520 A. D. It has, however, already been shown that after the fall of Nilámbar, there was no ruler of the whole kingdom, but that many petty chiefs exercised supreme power in different parts of the country. This being so, there is no reason why Viśva Simha should not have begun to rule some portion of the country while Chandana and Madana still held sway at Marálávása. Buchanan Hamilton says that “the Bihár Rájás reckon by the era of their ancestor, Viśva, whom they suppose began to govern in the Bengal year 916 or 1509 A. D.,” and as this, on the date arrived at for Nara Náráyaṇa’s accession, would give him a reign of 25 years, there seems to be no reason for discrediting the date thus assigned for Viśva Simha’s accession. We have seen that this prince gradually rose from the position of one of many petty chiefs to be ruler of the whole country from Rangpur to Kámarúpa, and that he eventually found himself strong enough to march against the Ahom king in Upper Assam. It is very unlikely he could have effected all this in a shorter time than that allowed him according to the above calculation. Finally Lakshmi Náráyaṇa’s *Vamśávali* mentions 25 years as the duration of his reign, and this is exactly the period intervening between 1509, the date of his accession according to the Koch era, and 1534, the date of his death according to Prasiddha Náráyaṇa’s *Vamśávali*.

Turning now to the kings who succeeded Nara Náráyaṇa, it has already been shown that Raghu Deva probably became king of the country east of the Sankosh in 1581 A. D. Guṇábhírám and Prasiddha Náráyaṇa’s *Vamśávali* agree in saying that his death took place in 1593 A. D., and we know from the *Pádisháhnámah* that Paríkshít was ruling when Jahángír came to the throne in 1605. We may, therefore, accept 1593 as the approximate date of Raghu’s death.

According to Guṇábhírám, Paríkshít died in 1606 A. D. at Patna. The *Pádisháhnámah*, however, places his defeat by Mukarram Khán in 1613-14, so that according to this account, his death must have taken place about 1614 or 1615 A. D.

Bali Náráyaṇa, who succeeded Paríkshít, is said by Guṇábhírám to have died in 1634 A. D.,* but it appears from the account given in the *Pádisháhnámah* that

Bali Narayana’s dates.

* The same date is given in Prasiddha Náráyaṇa’s *Vamśávali*.

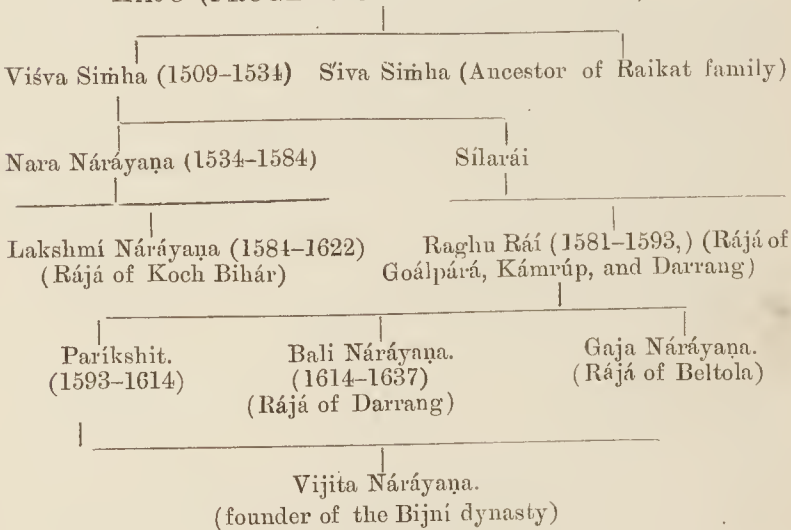
this is too early. According to this authority his death took place in 1637.

Regarding Lakshmi Náráyana, who succeeded his father in the western portion of the Koch kingdom in 1584 A. D., we know from Musalmán sources that he was still reigning in 1618. Babu Rám Chandra Ghosh says that he died in 1622 A. D.

The dates of these earlier Koch Kings appear therefore, to be approximately those shown in the following genealogical tree.

Summary.

HAJO (PROGENITOR OF KOCH RAJÁS).



SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE KOCH RAJÁS.

The subsequent history of the descendants of Lakshmi Náráyana will be found in Hunter's Statistical Account of Koch Bihar family. Koch Bihár, pages 409-426, and the only additional information of any importance of which I am aware, is that contained in the extracts from the *Fatḥiyah i 'Ibriyah* which were published by Blochmann in the J. A. S. B. for 1872, pages 63-68. From these extracts it appears that in 1558 A. D., during the wars for the succession to the Delhi throne, Rájá Bhíma Náráyana took advantage of the disturbed state of the country to make raids into Ghoraghát and attempted to recover Kámarúpa. In the latter endeavour he was thwarted by Jayadhvaia Simha, the Ahom king, who had also sent an army into Kámarúpa. When Mir Jumla became governor of Bengal, he at

once took steps to punish Bhíma Náráyana and JayadhvaJa Símba and to recover the lost territory. He began by invading Koch Bihár. Bhíma Náráyana, asked for pardon, but Mír Jumla refused to accept his excuses, and in November 1661, he started from Jahángírnagar with his army. Bhíma Náráyana had fortified the road *via* the Yak Duár, and also the Khuṅṅghát road, which passed by Rángamáṭi, but had neglected to protect a third which ran through the Moraṅ country. By this road, therefore, Mír Jumla advanced. The Rájá fled to the Bhotán hills, and the greater part of his baggage and guns and other munitions of war was captured by Mír Jumla's army. The latter sent to the Dharma Rájá of Bhotán, requesting him to deliver up Bhíma Náráyana, but this the Deva Rájá refused to do. Being pressed for time, Mír Jumla did not stay to enforce his request, but proceeded to carry out his projected invasion of Assam.

The Koch King is described in the *Faṭṭiyah i 'Ibriyah* as being noble and mighty and fond of company. He was a great wine-bibber, and was so addicted to the pleasures of his harem, that he neglected to look after his kingdom. He had a magnificent palace. There were flower beds in the streets, which were lined on each side with rows of trees. The weapons of the people were swords, firelocks and poisoned arrows.

This invasion by Mír Jumla is not mentioned in the account given by Hunter. Moreover, the name of the king at the time in question is said by him to be Praṇa Náráyana who came to the throne in 1627 and died in 1666 A. D.

The omission to refer to the invasion may be explained by the fact that it left no permanent effect. Mír Jumla advanced, and the king retreated without giving battle, and apparently returned again to his capital as soon as Mír Jumla vacated it. The discrepancy in the matter of names is also of very little importance. The character of the king as portrayed by Hunter agrees closely with that given in the *Faṭṭiya i 'Ibriyah*; we know that Viśva Símba, Nara Náráyana, S'íl-arái and others of the family bore each two different names, and there is thus no reason why Praṇa Náráyana should not also have been known as Bhíma Náráyana.

After Paríkshit's defeat, his son Vijita Náráyana was confirmed by the Musalmáns as Zamíndár of the country between the Manás and the Sankosh. He settled at Bijní and is the ancestor of the existing Bijní family. Under the auspices of this family, a small pamphlet was issued, some years ago, giving an account of Vijita's successors, but as they were not independent princes, there would be little use in dwelling on their history. It may,

however, be interesting to note the present status of the family and the manner in which it was created.* Under Mughal rule, the Rájá paid an annual tribute of Rs. 5,998, which was afterwards commuted to an annual delivery of 68 elephants, The Názim used to make up for short deliveries by sending a *Suzáwal* into the Rájá's estates and levying the balance due by force, but when the East India Company came into possession of Bengal, this method of recovering outstanding payments was abandoned, and during the years 1776–1787 A. D., only 90 elephants were received out of the 816 which should have been supplied. The contribution of elephants was again changed for a money payment in 1788, the amount fixed being Rs. 2,000. Two years later the Rájá agreed to pay another thousand rupees a year, but this offer was declined by the Governor-General, on the ground that the chance of losing the attachment of a Zamindár in possession of a border estate should not be risked for the sake of Rs. 1,000. Subsequently a deduction of Rs. 850 from his annual payment was allowed as compensation for the abolition of *sáyar*, so that the family now pay a total revenue of only Rs. 1,150, for an estate, the annual collections from which amount to very nearly two lakhs of rupees.†

In Darrang, Bali Náráyaṇa was succeeded by Mahendra Náráyaṇa, who is said to have made large grants of *Brahmottar* land to Bráhmaṇs. He died in 1643 A. D., and was succeeded by his son Chandra Náráyaṇa, who died in 1660, and was followed by his son Súrýa Náráyaṇa. This prince is said to have been worsted in battle by Manẓúr Khán in 1682, and taken captive to Delhi.‡ He escaped, but declined to resume his place as

* This information is extracted from a note by Mr. Forbes in 1875, on certain bundles of paper received from the Board of Revenue.

† It has been argued that the estate has never been permanently settled, that the payment is of the nature of a tribute and not an assessment, and that as Bijni is no longer a border estate, the reason for an unduly low assessment no longer exists. But this is a matter with which we are not at present concerned.

‡ According to Gunábhírám. Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vamśávali* says, that Mansúm Khán was the name of the Musalmán leader, and fixes 1675 as the date of the occurrence. The manuscript Yoginí Tautra on the other hand, says that it took place in 1709 A. D. No mention is made of the matter by Musalmán historians, and even the name of the Muhammaḍan leader does not appear in their accounts of events in Kámrúp. I have not mentioned Mír Jumla's invasion, which took place during this prince's reign, as that invasion was directed against the Áhoms, and there is no record of any conflict between Súrýa Náráyaṇa and the Musalmáns. The only reference to this king in the *Fáthiyah i 'Ibriyah* is the following:—"At this time Makar dhvaj, Rájá of Darrang, who is subject to the Rájá of Assam, came and paid his respects to the Nawáb (at Gauháṭí), presented an elephant, received a *Khil'at*, was promised protection, and was ordered to travel with the army."

Rájá.* He was succeeded by his brother Indra Náráyaṇa, who was at that time only five years old. During his minority, the Ahoms took advantage of dissensions amongst his counsellors to strengthen their hold on the country. Darrang alone remained in his possession, and even for this he had to pay an annual tribute. During his reign, Darrang is said to have been surveyed under the orders of the Ahom Rájá, presumably with the object of ascertaining the amount of tribute which Indra Náráyaṇa would be able to pay.† When his son Aditya Náráyaṇa succeeded him in 1725, the kingdom consisted only of that portion of the present sub-division of Maṅgaldái, which lies south of the Gosaiñ Kamala Ali, and three years later, the greater part of this small vestige of the heritage of his ancestors was wrested from him by his younger brother, Madhu Náráyaṇa, who took also one of the two family idols.‡ From this time, the family sank into comparative insignificance. They were now mere subordinates of the Ahoms, and exercised no powers except such as were conferred on them by the Ahom prince.

Later on, their position was still further reduced, and instead of being tributaries, they were simply agents for the Ahom King, and in return for managing Deś Darrang were allowed the lands which were cultivated by their personal slaves and servants, which were surveyed, and carefully recorded in the state records of the Ahoms.§ When the English came into possession of the country they were allowed to retain these lands subject to the payment of half the usual revenue on the area under cultivation, so long as they themselves remained in possession. On alienation of any of these lands, however, the privilege of paying at half rates is withdrawn, and an assessment at full rates introduced. The existing representatives of the family still hold most of the land originally granted to them, but owing to their bad management and extravagant habits, they are now reduced to a condition of comparative poverty.

* In Prasiddha Náráyaṇa's *Vamśávali*, it is said that he was detained in Bengal for 50 years and only returned to Assam in 1725 A. D., where he died ten years afterwards.

† According to the manuscript *Yoginí Tantra* this survey took place in 1707 A. D., and was carried out by one Dhaniráma.

‡ These are the Durgá or Burí Gosainí and Síva or Burá Gosaiñ. The gold ornaments of these two idols were stolen within a few months of each other, some seven years ago.

§ Report on the Darrang district by Captain Mathie, Principal Assistant, dated 15th February, 1835.